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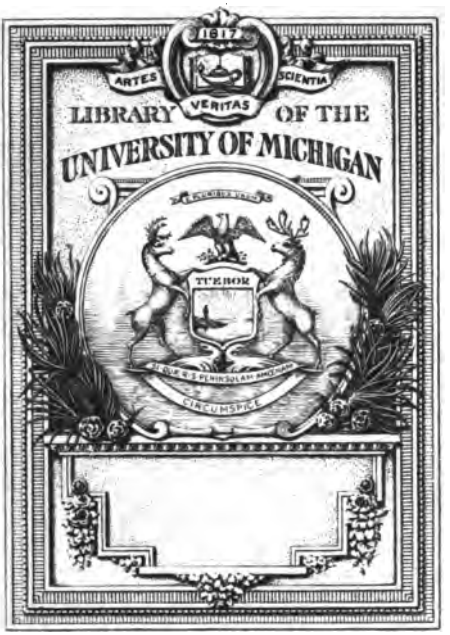
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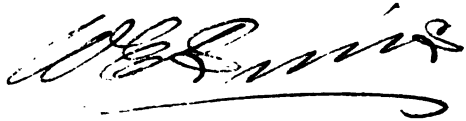

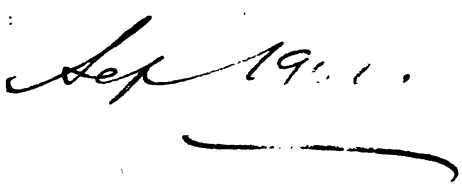

THREE ASPECTS

OF THE LATE

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

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BY

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LONGEVITY AND CENTENARIANS; A STUDY OF EUPHUISM;
THE SUB-CONSCIOUS MIND; AND OTHER ESSAYS AND LECTURES.

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PREFACE.

At the request of Members of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool, I am publishing the three "Studies of Tennyson" which were read as Papers for discussion at its Meetings in 1897 and 1898.

Abstracts only of these Papers having been printed in the Annual "Transactions," these "Studies" now appear for the *first time in full*, revised, considerably enlarged, and issued under the new and more definite title of this book.

Without putting this unpretending little volume into competition with the fuller and more critical treatises by Stopford Brooke, Van Dyke, Dawson, Stedman, and others, who deal exhaustively with the vast life-work of Tennyson, I do claim as original my classification of both the poetry and character of the great Laureate, and, by a concise comprehensiveness, have justified, I think, this small addition (principally intended for the busy man, the junior student, and the senior classes of private schools) to the ever-growing library of Tennysonian literature.

From the late lamented Sir Walter Besant—truly called the Author's Friend—I received much wise counsel as to modes of publication, and have followed his advice by starting a subscription list, which has been successful. He gave me further encouragement, after reading the abstracts of my separate "Studies,"

by the remark—"Your lectures on Tennyson form a graceful and scholarly tribute to his memory."

The present Lord Tennyson I have to thank for cordial and commendatory acknowledgments of my "Studies" as they reached him, and especially for the gracious permission to reproduce the "great moonlight picture of the Bard," by G. F. Watts, R.A., as my Frontispiece. His Lordship's innate kindness of heart is only equalled by the grace, distinction, and popularity with which he is serving the Empire as Governor of the important Colony of South Australia.

Among other friends I have to thank Mr. C. W. Sutton, Principal Librarian of the Manchester Free Libraries, for helpful advice on matters of detail.

To the Members of the good old Society who have conferred upon me the honour of election to the President's Chair (of which I am the thirtieth occupant since its foundation in 1812), I hope this volume may be welcome as a souvenir of its Author's past work for them (eight Papers during seven years); and I trust that the reading public, who will surely appreciate its very "popular" price, will derive from its perusal some of the pleasure experienced by me in searching out, for exposition, the beauties of one of the greatest poets of the Victorian Era.

JOHN MURRAY MOORE.

51, CANNING STREET,
LIVERPOOL, *July, 1901.*

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I.—Tennyson as a Poet of Nature.

(First delivered, April 12th, 1897.)

On Sunday, the sixth of August, 1809, the household of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, Rector of Somersby, &c., in Lincolnshire, was gladdened by the birth of a son, the fourth in a family which eventually reached the number of twelve children, who was named Alfred, after the greatest of our Saxon kings.

On the sixth of October, 1892, the whole English-speaking world was saddened when the news spread abroad that this same Alfred Tennyson, now "Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford," Poet Laureate to the Queen, and the supreme poet of the day, had breathed his last.

After an unsullied life and an ever-widening fame of eighty-three years

> **Death's little rift had rent the faultless lute—**
> **The singer of undying songs was dead.**

A few days later our national Walhalla received his remains, honoured by mourners representing Royalty, the Peerage, Science, Art, Literature and Politics, and laid in a grave close to that of his friend and fellow-poet,

Robert Browning, to the sweetly solemn music set to his own anthems of faith and hope, "Silent Voices," and "Crossing the Bar."

The magnificent life-work of sixty years bequeathed to the Anglo-Saxon race by our grand old poet, and through our race to the world at large, forms too vast a subject for three, or even twenty lectures. I have selected, therefore, after much careful thought and study of his collected poems (Ed. 1894), the three aspects of Tennyson's character and poetry, which are comprised within the title of these three lectures—namely, "As a Poet of Nature"; "As a National and Patriotic Poet"; and (in a wider scope still) "As a Poet of Humanity."

The personality of a great poet being always of interest, I shall introduce into these lectures such incidents, anecdotes, and descriptions as in any way cast light upon Tennyson's many-sided nature.

The birth-year (1809) of Alfred Tennyson was notable for the advent into this weary world of men and women of talent and of genius. In our own country were born Elizabeth Barrett (afterwards Mrs. Browning), Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), William Ewart Gladstone, John Stuart Blackie, Charles Darwin, and Mary Cowden Clarke; on the Continent, Mendelssohn and Chopin; in the United States, Abraham Lincoln, Edgar Allan Poe, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. All these eminent contemporaries the poet survived, except the venerable authoress of the *Shakspere Concordance*,

and our ever-vigorous "Grand Old Man" of Hawarden.

As the subject of this lecture bridged over, as it were, a transition period of English poetry, by carrying over the Romanticism of the first half of the nineteenth century into the scientific achievements and spiritual aspirations of the second half, it may be useful to glance at the state of poetry in Great Britain at the time of his birth, so as to place Tennyson in his true historical relationship to the earlier poets,—all of whom, except Wordsworth, he was destined to eclipse.

In the year 1809, "when George the Third was King," the Peninsular War was in progress, and Napoleon's power was at its zenith. Thos. Campbell produced his greatest poem, "Gertrude of Wyoming," and his exquisite plaintive story of "O'Connor's Child"; Lord Byron's satire, "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," in which he attacked Sir Walter Scott for writing "Marmion" for money, and slashed all round at his critics, came out; Southey was writing his prolix "Curse of Kehama"; Coleridge was editing a magazine, and living with Wordsworth, who was inditing his "Essay on the Convention of Cintra." Felicia Dorothea Browne (our Liverpool poetess, afterwards Mrs. Hemans) had just produced, at the age of fifteen, her first book of poems, "Early Blossoms"; and Tom Moore was busy on his "Irish Melodies." The impressive "Burial of Sir John Moore" was written by the Rev. Chas. Wolfe in 1809. The young poets Shelley (b. 1792) and Keats

(b. 1795) had not as yet put forth their blossoms of poetic genius.

The father of the young poet, the Rev. Dr. George Clayton Tennyson, was a tall, athletic, energetic, cultured clerical scholar of the good old type of country clergyman, and of noble ancestry. Himself setting a good example, he taught his children all the virtues, high principles of conduct, and as much knowledge in all branches as would fit them for admission into the Louth Grammar School. When his sons were ready for Cambridge he practised much thrift that he might give them an University training. He was learned in Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, and Latin; he was a strict disciplinarian with his boys. Mrs. Tennyson, the Rector's wife, was the tenderest and most loving of mothers, with an abounding cheerfulness and humour that made home the brightest place in the world to her children. She richly deserved her son's exquisite tribute of affection, given in the poem of "The Princess," and in the early short piece, "Isabel."

Alfred Tennyson was happy in his parentage, and not infelicitous in his place of birth, which needs special mention, for, as Goethe (trans.) says—

> **Would'st thou a poet fully understand?**
> **Then go and see that poet's native land.**

Somersby is a picturesque little village, near the town of Louth, in the most interesting part of Lincolnshire. Instead of dreary waters and level plains of

marsh, such as we associate with the typical "fen country," the landscape round Somersby and Wood Enderby is rounded in contour, sweeping up into hills, bare or wooded, and dropping down into valleys rich in flowery hollows, and patches of meadow and cornfield, with here and there a brook, an old grange, a tall-towered church, and ivy-covered cottages.

The boy Alfred grew up in this country-side healthy and strong, yet shy and reserved to strangers, and remarkable for a keen love of Nature in all its details, combined with romantic love of adventure, and a precocious power of expression in verse. His "Nature-poetry" began early, for at four years of age, before he could read, he ran down the Rectory avenue, in a storm, shouting,

I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind.

Couple with this, his first line, the very last lines he revised for the press, before his death, addressed to the Earth:

All's well that ends well.
Whirl, and follow the Sun!

and we have Tennyson's complete cycle of "Nature-Poetry."

Young Alfred loved his Byron, Scott, Pope, and Thomson, and wrote hundreds of lines in their various styles, from the age of ten up to fourteen. When the news of Byron's death (April 19th, 1824) reached Somersby, the boy "felt as if the whole world was

darkened" for him, and went out to carve in the rocks, "Byron is dead."

Then began the influence of Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth, apparent in his first published volume, "Poems by Two Brothers," for which a bookseller in Louth gave the two poets Charles and Alfred Tennyson £20. (Their eldest brother Frederick contributed four poems to this volume.) In 1829, the year after "Poems by Two Brothers" appeared, Alfred and Charles entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Alfred Tennyson soon made his mark among the most intellectual and earnest students of his year.

Arthur Henry Hallam, two years his junior in age, became his most intimate friend.

At the age of 18 a friend at college describes him graphically as "six feet high, broad-chested, strong limbed, his face Shakespearian, with deep eyelids, his forehead ample, crowned with dark wavy hair, his head finely poised, his hand the admiration of sculptors, long fingers with square tips, soft as a child, but of great size and strength. What struck one most about him was the union of strength with refinement."

In 1829 Tennyson won the Chancellor's Gold Medal for the best poem upon the unpromising subject, "Timbuctoo."

This brought him into notice, and he was elected into a select club called, or nick-named, "*The Twelve Apostles.*" Whenever a vacancy occurred it was filled up by unani-

mous vote. All these "Apostles" distinguished themselves in after life. Among them were Arthur Hallam, Monckton Milnes, Henry Alford, R. C. Trench, Herman Merivale, H. Lushington, Jas. Spedding, J. W. Blakesley, W. Thompson, and F. D. Maurice. Here the young poet's productions were freely criticised, and he often adopted suggested alterations.

In 1830, during a vacation, Alfred Tennyson and Arthur Hallam, animated, like Byron in 1823, with enthusiasm for patriots striving for liberty, made a perilous journey to the Pyrenees, taking money and despatches to the insurgent allies of Torrijos, the leader of a revolt against the tyrant, King Ferdinand VII., and the Inquisition. They narrowly escaped capture, but safely returned, and the scenery of the grand Alpine barrier between France and Spain made an ineffaceable impression on Tennyson's memory. "In the Valley of Cauteretz," written in 1861, commemorates in pathetic lines this memorable journey of the two bosom-friends.

In 1830 and 1832 Tennyson published his first independent book of verse, "Poems, chiefly Lyrical." The principal pieces were: "The Ode to Memory," "The Miller's Daughter," "Œnone," "The Palace of Art," etc. Most of these poems showed true poetic genius and the beginnings of a distinctive style. Though praised by a few discerning friends and some fair-minded critics, the author's work was caustically criticised by Lockhart in the "Quarterly Review," and contemptuously by "Chris-

topher North" in "Blackwood." Tennyson, of robuster frame and stronger will than poor John Keats, responded by refraining from publishing any poetry for ten years. The death of his father in 1831 occasioned his retirement from Cambridge University without taking his degree. The death abroad of his *fidelis amicus*, Hallam, in 1832, deepened his gloom. It was a time of real trial, and such poems as "The Two Voices" exhibit his sadness. But he was industriously composing new poems and remodelling old ones during the whole cryptic decennium. And when, in 1842, the two vols. of "Poems by Alfred Tennyson" revealed his matured though still young genius, at the age of 33 the poet rose with a bound to the zenith of fame. The reading public, the critics, and the poets—of whom the only great one left was Wordsworth—recognised, in the author of "Ulysses," "The Talking Oak," "Dora," "The Gardener's Daughter," "Morte d'Arthur," "Sir Galahad," and "Locksley Hall," an original genius of the very first rank. Wordsworth, who succeeded Southey as Laureate in 1843, frankly acknowledged two years later that "Tennyson is decidedly the first of our living poets." In 1845 Sir Robert Peel granted him a Civil List pension of £200: and in 1850 he was enabled to marry his fiancée of twenty years before—Emily Sellwood. This year was marked, also, by his appointment as Laureate in succession to Wordsworth and by the publication of his greatest poem, the matchless elegy of his friend A. H. Hallam, "In Memoriam."

In my other two lectures I shall deal with the chief events of the subsequent life of the honoured poet, so far as they touch upon my subjects.

But now we have to deal with the spirit, manner, and style in which Alfred Tennyson regarded, observed, valued, and described Nature, its natural objects and its phenomena. Studying his poems after having acquired a knowledge of his home, his life, his travels, tastes, pursuits, and habits, will vastly increase both our comprehension and our enjoyment of the works of Tennyson.

See how his "Ode to Memory" brings before us the very picture (in words) of the old Rectory of Somersby, with

> **The seven elms, the poplars four**
> **That stand beside my father's door, &c., &c.,**
>
> **Or a garden, bowered close**
> **With plaited alleys of the trailing rose.**
> **Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,**
> **Or opening upon level plots**
> **Of crownéd lilies, standing near**
> **Purple-spikéd lavender . . . .**

Further away from the Rectory garden, the scene of his mimic battles, sieges, and recitations of the Crusaders' exploits, we have

> **. . . . the livelong bleat**
> **Of the thick-fleecéd sheep from wattled folds**
> **Upon the ridgéd wolds.**

And in the direction of the seaside, where that part of Lincolnshire becomes fen-like, the word-artist, Memory, is supposed to

. . . . . gaze
On the prime labour of thine early days,
No matter what the sketch might be;
Whether the high field or the bushless Pike
Or even a sand-built ridge
Of heapéd hills that mound the sea
Overblown with murmurs harsh,
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,
Where from the frequent bridge
Like emblems of infinity
The trenchéd waters run from sky to sky.

The characteristic features of the fen country *proper* are introduced here and there in the "Idylls of the King," always with appropriateness. But the most complete idea of this kind of scenery in all Tennyson's works is given in these lines from the "Dying Swan," where the gloom of the cloudy sky and the dreary scenery are skilfully made to enhance and set in relief the pathos of the swan-song:—

The plain was grassy, wild, and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful grey.
With an inner voice the river ran
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on
And took the reed-tops as it went . . .
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,

And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among
Were flooded over with eddying song.

You will note the botanical knowledge here displayed, of which I shall take account more minutely later on; and the art of using the old English word "marish" for "marsh," so as to give the extra syllable required for that particular line.

As the Tennyson family went every summer to Mablethorpe-on-Sea for bathing, the scene of this exquisite and compact vignette of a picture in the Palace of Art is easily traced:

A still, salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,
Left on the shore, that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their *moon-led* waters white.

I have italicised one word in this verse, "*moon-led*," for there is a pretty touch of science in it, making the epithet far more original than "moon-*lit*" which nine out of ten poets would have employed. One has to read Tennyson *carefully*, or one misses many rarely beautiful touches.

After leaving Somersby the Tennyson family moved to High Beech in Epping Forest (in 1837), thence to Tunbridge Wells, and then to Boxley, near Maidstone. Here we have the scenery of Kent, a great contrast to that of Lincoln:

> The happy valleys, half in light and half
> Far-shadowing from the West—a land of peace.
> Grey halls alone among their massive groves;
> Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower
> Half lost in belts of hop, and breadths of wheat;
> The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the seas—
> A red sail or a white, and, far beyond,
> Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

A graceful and simple invitation in verse to the Rev. F. D. Maurice to visit him in his later home in the Isle of Wight, gives us an idea of the poet's quiet home:—

> Where, far from noise and smoke of town,
> I watch the twilight falling down
> All round a careless-ordered garden,
> Close to the edge of a noble down . . .
> For groves of pine on either hand
> To break the blasts of winter stand,
> And, further on, the hoary Channel
> Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand.

Nature, of course, inspires all true poets, whether city-bred or country-bred: but the *expression* of her infinite variety of charm varies almost as infinitely in different bards.

Rugged Robert Burns exclaims, in his admiration—

> O Nature, a' thy shows and forms
> To feeling pensive hearts hae charms!

And we find those poets who moulded young Tennyson's "form," if nothing else, all differing in regard of their *poetic expression* of Nature.

Byron, who concerned himself with Man almost en-

tirely, we may omit. But Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth, each of whom have close imitators in living poets amongst us, need special mention.

John Keats, whose star set prematurely, was a Nature-worshipper, imbued with Hellenic idealism. He saw Nature as a Spirit of Beauty, drawing out his soul at times into ecstasy. The nightingale's song echoed his sadness; the lark's carol his joy. His influence coloured the earlier poems of Tennyson, and at the present day the works of Norman Gale, John Thompson, W. B. Yeats, and Temple Nowell are remarkably "Keatsian." Yet his poems are not read nowadays, though often alluded to; and the cause of this gradual oblivion, in my belief, is that he taught the false principle that Beauty rather than Truth should be worshipped for its own sake; and, furthermore, we find in Keats neither a clear faith in a Supreme Being, nor a real sympathy with Humanity,—such as Burns, Wordsworth, and Tennyson showed.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, a wrong-headed genius, whose soul seems to have been that of an ancient Greek reincarnated in the modern Englishman, and always conscious of the anachronism, passionately adored the Goddess Nature, under the forms of the Spirits of Life, Love, and Beauty, or peopled his earthly scenery with the fauns, dryads, and nymphs of mythology. Carrying the pantheistic ideas of many classical poets to an extreme, Shelley regarded his soul as one in essence with the life of animal, bird, and tree, all springing from the

Spirit of Nature, all-sufficing Power,
Necessity, thou mother of the world!

His poetry is all fascinating, even when repulsive, for it is full of the richest and most delicate fairy-like fancy. From the luxuriant language in which he depicts the grander manifestations of Nature—the tempest, the glaciers, the eternal snows, the avalanche, the weird and changeful glory of sunrise and sunset—Shelley has been called the "Turner of Poetry." If this synonym is appropriate, then Tennyson is worthy of the title of the "Constable" or "David Cox" of Poetry as far as landscape and sea-scape are concerned. It was when Tennyson, in the 1842 "Poems by A. T.," shook off the unconscious Shelleyism of too ornate and elaborate descriptions, that his forcefulness and pithiness took a firm hold of readers. Undoubtedly Shelley has influenced most subsequent poets—for example, William Watson, W. E. Henley, and A. C. Swinburne. I cannot resist quoting a few lines from the little-known works of Alexander Smith, the weaver poet of Kilmarnock, as an illustration of Shelleyism in its joyous, not its pessimistic phase. The toiler in the dull smoky factory-town longs, with all his soul,

To hear the soft and whispering rain, feel the dewy cool of leaves,
Watch the lightnings dart like swallows round the brooding thunder-eaves,
To lose the sense of whirling streets among the breezy crests of hills,

Skies of larks, and hazy landscapes, streak'd with threads of silver rills;
To stand with forehead bathed in sunset, on a mountain's summer crown,
And look up and catch the shadow of the great Night coming down;
One great life in my myriad veins, in leaves, in flowers, in cloudy cars,
Blowing underfoot in clover, beating overhead in stars.

William Wordsworth (b. 1770, d. 1850), who was Laureate from 1843 to 1850, is admitted by all competent to form an opinion to be *the* Poet of Nature of the Victorian Era. Religious and benevolent by nature, and reared in stern simplicity of life, Wordsworth loved the mountains, and chose the Lake Country for his home. Here for many years he reaped—for the benefit of the world—

The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

His calm soul and steady mind, undisturbed by philosophic doubt or by theological and political polemics, and not cramped by collegiate over-culture, mirrored the beautiful symbolisms of hill, dale, heath, stream, and flower and reflected them in his simple, wholesome, thoughtful poems. What a contrast to Shelley in every way! Notice the pervading *reposefulness* of Wordsworth's Nature-poems. The good man sings (to use his own verse),

With heart as calm as lakes that sleep
In frosty moonlight glistening,
Or mountain-torrents, where they creep
Along a channel smooth and deep
To their own far-off murmurs listening.

There was no aspect of Nature in which this Seer could not discern some unnoted quality, nor any mood of mind, inspired by her, from which his thought could not throw light upon Man's inner being. Beneath Wordsworth's "reposefulness" lay profound emotion. It was only one who loved God, Man, and Nature intensely who could say—

> **Thanks to the human heart by which we live,**
> **Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,**
> **To me the meanest flower that blows can give**
> **Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.**

To Wordsworth, the daisy, his favourite flower, is symbolical of

> **The homely sympathy that heeds**
> **The common life our nature breeds—**
> **A wisdom fitted to the needs**
> **Of hearts at leisure.**

And his "impromptu" verse in his daughter's album gives a gem of thought:—

> ***Small* service is *true* service while it lasts**
> **Of humblest friends, bright creature! scorn not one;**
> **The daisy by the shadow that it casts,**
> **Protects the lingering dew-drop from the sun.**

Now the intellect of Tennyson was cast in a different mould from that of the older poet. Not only did he study Nature, but also the laws of Nature and the *kosmos* of natural science. His mind was inquisitive, acquisitive, analytical. Though a true poet, he loved accuracy of detail to the minutest feature, and sought for a scientific

reason for every natural phenomenon or process. The discoveries of the telescope, microscope, spectroscope, and camera gave him keen delight, and evolution-theories affected his later poems. All his life long he tried

> **To follow knowledge like a sinking star**
> **Beyond the utmost bound of human ken.**

The lad of twelve who could "reel off hundreds of lines like these":—

> **The quick-wing'd gnat doth make a boat**
> **Of his old husk wherewith to float**
> **To a new life! All low things range**
> **To higher, but *I* cannot change,**

and

> **The rays of many a rolling central star**
> **Aye flashing earthwards, have not reached us yet,**

grew into a poet who combined, uniquely, high imaginative power, sensuousness without sensuality, wide human sympathies, and marvellous conciseness of expression, with delight in the ordered laws of Nature and acute perception of the analogies between the physical and the moral. Though at times perplexed with the enigmas of life and the secondary causes of change, decay, evil, and death, Tennyson's profound religious nature never lost grasp of Him who is the Great First Cause of all Nature. It was of the God revealed in the Bible, the teachings of which pervade his works, that the poet wrote—

> **I found Him in the shining of the stars,**
> **I mark'd Him in the flowering of the fields.**

The late Bishop of Carlisle (Dr. Harvey Goodwin) tells an anecdote bearing on this attitude of the poet towards his Creator. When returning home from a country walk with a party of friends, Tennyson lagged behind the rest. He was noticed to pause at a brook that ran by the roadside; to stoop down, bringing his eyes as near the surface of the water as he could (for he was near-sighted), and to examine with intense interest for several minutes the subaqueous insects it contained. When he rejoined his friends his first utterance was, "What an imagination God has!"

Doubtless you are all familiar with his sonnet, "Flower in the Crannied Wall," wherein he draws a parallel between the mystery of plant-creation and the mysteries of the human and Divine natures. Of his exquisite lines on the fragile shell lying on the sea-shore of Brittany, I really must quote a few:

Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairly well,
With delicate spire and whorl;
How exquisitely minute—
A miracle of design!

* * *

Frail, but of force to withstand
Year upon year the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock
Here on the Breton strand.

This frail shell, undestroyed amidst the storms, may symbolise to the half-mad hero of "Maud" his first and highest nature preserved amidst the storms of passion.

Like Wordsworth, Tennyson drew many a true moral from Nature's processes, and always with the brevity which he considered essential to artistic poetry. The enchantress Vivien sings to Merlin the Wizard of the suspicion which "cankers love" as

> The little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
> Which, slowly rotting inward, moulders all.

Sir Modred, the deformed son of King Arthur and Bellicent, always plotting and scheming to overthrow his father, is accidentally hurt by Sir Lancelot; he smiled:

> *But*, ever after, the small violence done
> Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart
> As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long
> A little bitter pool about a stone
> On the bare coast.

The renewal of man's life beyond the grave, in a brighter and happier form, was suggested to Tennyson by the metamorphosis of the ugly masked *larva* of the *Libellulidæ* into the gorgeous Dragon-Fly, which he had often watched:

> To-day I saw the dragon-fly
> Come from the wells where he did lie.
> An inner impulse rent the veil
> Of his old husk: from head to tail
> Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.
> He dried his wings; like gauze they grew;
> Through crofts and pastures wet with dew
> A living flash of light he flew.

And this beautiful simile from Nature of the Resurrection is the more accurate because the *larva* of the dragon-fly does not pass through the intermediate stage of the *pupa* or *chrysalis*, like other *larvæ* (Miall).

The poet's quickness of hearing and keenness of smell in some measure compensated for his near- (but strong) sight. The farmers of Lincolnshire learnt from this youth facts which were constantly under their eyes, yet which they never *saw*—such as that the buds of the ash tree were black every March, and that the lark always descended side-ways on the wing.

To the Field Naturalist who has some love for poetry it would be an interesting study to note down every object in the realm of Nature mentioned by Tennyson, and observe how *accurate* he is. Dr. Andrew Wilson once in Scotland when weather-bound put his works to this test, and found the poet correct in every particular. "I was struck with the variety of his knowledge," wrote Bayard Taylor, in 1857, after spending a day at Farringford. "Not a little flower on the downs escaped his notice, and the geology of the coast, both terrestrial and submarine, was perfectly familiar to him. I thought of a remark that a distinguished author [Thackeray] once made to me, that 'Tennyson was the wisest man he knew.'" Thirty-one years later, the poet, now in his eightieth year, was still an ardent "field naturalist" and a delightful outdoor companion, as Miss Mary Anderson, the loveliest of all modern actresses, describes in a

letter: "I had the happiness of joining him in his daily walk. His tender interest in every bud, flower, and leaf was charming. How many pretty legends he had about each! The cliffs, the sky, the sea, the shrubs, the very lumps of chalk under foot—he had a word for them all. The things he read in Nature's book were full of the same kind of poetry as his own: and the sunbeams of his cheerful spirit flood all my memories of those delightful walks."

There is no question but that Tennyson found Nature a bracing and cheerful restorative in times of misfortune, and in moods of depression. "The Two Voices" showed his actual mental gloom, almost amounting to despair, after the losses of 1844. But Hope eventually prevailed:—

> **And forth into the fields I went,**
> **And Nature's living motion lent**
> **The pulse of hope to discontent . . . .**
> **I wondered, while I paced along:**
> **The woods were filled so full with song**
> **There seemed no room for sense of wrong . . .**
> **I marvelled how the mind was brought**
> **To anchor by one gloomy thought;**
> **And wherefore rather I made choice**
> **To commune with that barren voice**
> **Than him that said Rejoice! Rejoice!**

Poets are unanimous in one sentiment—love for country scenery and the refreshment given to the weary, sad, or wounded spirit by Nature's voices. I need scarcely remind you of Longfellow's sonnet—

If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows that thou wouldst forget, etc.

The permanence of Nature is not taught by Tennyson; but it is regarded as a source of comfort by Alphonse de Lamartine, politician, historian, and a poet of no mean order. In "Le Vallon" he exhorts the old man "to plunge into Nature's bosom" in these exquisite lines:—

Tes jours, tristes et courts, comme des jours d'automne
Déclinent comme l'ombre au penchant des coteaux;
L'Amitié te trahit—la pitié t'abandonne—
Et seule tu descends le sentier des tombeaux:
Mais la Nature est là, qui t'invite, et qui t'aime,
Plonge-toi dans son sein, qu'elle t'ouvre toujours;
Quand tout change pour toi, la Nature est la même
Et le même soleil se lève sur tes jours!

And, not to multiply quotations, in many of our present poets the note of pessimism which I shall take account of when I come to present to you "Tennyson as a Poet of Humanity" is sometimes substituted by a manly and hopeful tone. As, for example, in Temple Newell's "Song of the Soul" (last verse):

Read Nature's book: no gospel of despair
Is written there;
'Tis cast in the propitious horoscope
Of boundless hope.
So, in thy kindred heart, let hope's sweet eyes
Undimmed, look upward, though creation sighs.

Tennyson prefers to depict *bits* of natural scenery, of sea, sky, sunset and sunrise, and cloud-effects, and by marvellously few artistic touches to bring them before

us, rather than to apostrophise Nature *au large* as his predecessors did. Gray's famous "Elegy" owes much of its success to the brief word-pictures of its opening stanzas. From Tennyson's Elegy, "In Memoriam," I excerpt three such pictures—the first of a calm summer day:—

> Calm is the morn without a sound,
> Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
> And only through the faded leaf
> The chesnut pattering to the ground.

Then we have a most vivid picture, in eight lines, of a storm in autumn:—

> To-night the wind begins to rise
> And roar from yonder dropping day,
> The last red leaf is whirled away;
> The rooks are blown about the skies.
>
> The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
> The cattle huddled on the lea,
> And, wildly dashed on tower and tree,
> The sunbeam strikes along the world.

The accuracy and originality of the Nature-pictures which abound throughout Tennyson's poetry are associated with a habit he had formed (as he told Mr. S. E. Dawson, of Montreal, in a letter which is of great value to the student of his works, written in 1882) of making notes of what he saw and heard in Nature, for future use. "There was a period in my life when, as an artist takes rough sketches in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling,

in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in Nature." For example:—

A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight.

Suggestion: The sea one night at Torquay, when Torquay was the most lovely sea-village in England. The sky was covered with thin vapour, and the moon behind it

A great black cloud
Drags inward from the deep.

Suggestion: A coming storm seen from the top of Snowdon.

The song of the trees in "The Princess," which encourages the Prince in his quest, was derived by Tennyson during a walk through the New Forest in a strong breeze:—

A wind arose and rushed upon the south
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
Of the wild wood together; and the voice
Went with it, "Follow, follow, thou shalt win."

All the seasons of the year are depicted in Tennyson, in parts, but the Spring in greater fulness. Spring is the favourite with all poets. In contrast with Thomson's diffuse and (to our ideas) artificially stiff "Come, Gentle Spring, ethereal mildness, come!" Tennyson gives us such vivid naturalistic pictures as the following:—

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush,
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March. . . .

Bring orchis, bring the fox-glove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips, dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

And, in a trope exactly befitting the dramatic situation in the Idyll, "Lancelot and Elaine," we have the Spring as a maiden:—

Like souls that balance joy and pain
With tears and smiles from heaven again,
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sunlit fall of rain.

Often by critics compared to Theocritus among the Greek poets and to Virgil among the Latin bards, Tennyson shows this resemblance in his poems, the "Coming of Spring" and the "Progress of Spring," but without the slightest imitation of the classics. Now here, taken from the latter poem, is the beautiful welcome of the birds (both migratory and permanent) to Spring, personified as a gracious, golden-haired, large-eyed Queen, to whom all animated Nature does homage. First:—

The ground-flame of the crocus breaks the mould . . . .
Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop cold. . . . .

Then, gradually, the ice and snow melt; the rivulets run free; and, in a burst of avian melody,

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome her,
About her glance the tits, and shriek the jays,
Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker,
The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,
While round her brows a woodland culver flits,
Watching her large light eyes and gracious looks,
And in her open palm a halcyon sits
Patient—the secret splendour of the brooks. . .
The black-cap warbles, and the turtle purrs,
The starling claps his tiny castanets. . . . .
Now past her feet the swallow circling flies,
A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet her hand;
Her light makes rainbows in my closing eyes,
I hear a charm of song through all the land.

In these fourteen lines we have twelve of our most important native birds gracefully characterised by a *poetical ornithologist.* Tennyson only could do this: most poets being satisfied with the limited selection of the dove, nightingale, swan, lark, and cuckoo. Not only did the poet know every bird by its note, but also could imitate most of them; and once, when a lad, so successfully mimicked the cry of a young owl that it flew into his attic bedroom-window and became a domesticated pet. His double song entitled "The Owl" cleverly imitates its hooting in words. His ear was acute enough to catch the faint, high-pitched shriek of the bat, which he calls by its old English name, "flittermouse" in his fairy poem, "The Voyage of Maeldune."

Of the tender and practical consideration for our native birds in winter shown by Tennyson, we have a proof in "The Blackbird"—

O, Blackbird! sing me something well;
While all the neighbours shoot thee round
I keep smooth plots of fruitful ground
Where thou may'st warble, eat, and dwell.

With what ingenuity and fidelity Tennyson mimicks the three tunes of the thrush, which he prefers to designate "Throstle," you shall hear:—

Summer is coming, summer is coming,
(a) I *know it*, I *know it*, I *know it* . . . .
Sing the New Year in, under the blue,
Last year you sang it as gladly.
(b) *New, new, new, new*—Is it then so new
That you should carol so madly?
(c) *Here* again, *here, here, here*, Happy Year,
O warble unchidden, unbidden.
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden.

In these lines I have italicised, and marked by a, b, c, the three distinctly recognisable tones (monotone, couplets, or triplets) of the song of the thrush. In 1889 Tennyson fed all his garden birds, as usual, from his window, and composed this song in his summerhouse, listening to

Their sweet jargoning.

The poet's favourite bird was the king-fisher (*Alcedo*), our only brilliant-plumaged native—a strange survival of the far-back sub-tropical age of Britain—called by him the "halcyon," its Greek name. Next to the king-fisher the woodpecker (*Picus*) is Tennyson's favourite. As both these birds are becoming rare in our

islands, in another generation, possibly, Tennyson's poems might be quoted as an authority for their existence here in our time. Certainly the dialect-philologist will thank the poet for preserving such expressive old country names as "flittermouse," "balm-cricket," "grig," "throstle," "missel," "mavis," "corn-crake," "butter-bump," "lintwhite," "buzzard-clock," "eft," "holt," "garth," "maze," "burgeons," &c. Tennyson ingeniously defended his use of obsolete or local words thus:—"I always seek for *the word* which seems most vividly to call up or *represent* the act or object I am bringing before the reader's mind; and I nearly always find the magic word in Anglo-Saxon."

Nevertheless, the fact remains that only his simply-expressed poems, such as "The May Queen," "The Grandmother," the songs in "The Princess," and other like pieces, are *really* "popular." The "man in the street" and the concert-goer do not want to refer to a dictionary in order to understand the words of a poem or song.

For recitation, Tennyson himself preferred "Maud" above all his poems. The garden-scene was composed in Sir John Simeon's quaint old-fashioned garden at Swainston, near Freshwater. It was a local touch of colour then, when the "caw, caw, caw" of the many rooks in the high old elms was filling his ears, that the poet gave to this passage:—

Birds in the high Hall-garden,
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

From Valentia, in Ireland, or possibly from the extreme north of Scotland, Tennyson obtained the material for those grand lines upon the king of birds, (now becoming rare indeed) the eagle:—

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

But I must pass on, though I had many more tempting "bird-studies" to present to you—the "heron letting down the other leg, to dream of supper in distant pools;" "the great plover's human whistle," &c., &c.

Trees, flowers, plants, corn, grass, and all the fruits of the Earth are the common property of all poets. Yet how differently from others does our great Laureate use them! As a poet-botanist he is unrivalled, for his choice is wider than that of the combined poetry of any two other bards. Over seventy species I have enumerated in searching through his works. As a comparison, let us take a few verses from that beautiful, but unequal, and sad poem of Shelley's, "The Sensitive Plant":—

Then the pied wind-flowers, and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,

> Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
> Till they die of their own dear loveliness;
> And the Naiad-like Lily of the Vale,
> Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale . .
> And the hyacinth, purple, and white, and blue,
> Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
> Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
> It was felt like an odour within the sense .
> And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
> The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
> And all rare blossoms from every clime
> Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

The flowers are prettily and gracefully introduced, but there is here nothing approaching the concise and original treatment of tree, plant, and flower in "The Gardener's Daughter" and in "Maud." Single lines, for instance, in the former poem are perfect sketches:—

> A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.
>
> The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

And the bold, almost startling use of bud and leaf:—

> A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime,
> In the little grove where I sit.
>
> And out he walk'd when the wind, like a broken
> worldling wail'd,
> And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove
> thro' the air.

I refer you to the garden-scene itself for the highly-wrought fantasy of the waiting, watching, weeping, whispering flowers—endued for the nonce with human powers, to welcome the heroine. The pervading allitera-

tion, you will notice, heightens the musical flow of the delicious lines.

Taking Tennyson's entire works into consideration, I should say that his favourite flowers were, for colour, the rose, lily, crocus, and daffodil; and for perfume, the violet, woodbine, and jessamine.

In that charming historical tree-poem, "The Talking Oak," the real poetry of it is not marred, but enhanced by such fine botanical touches as—

> **Tho' I circle in the grain**
> **Five hundred rings of years, etc.**

When the fair maiden Olivia, in joy at finding her name carved on the old tree by her lover, tries in vain to embrace the giant bole, the oak says:—

> **I wish'd myself the fair young beech**
> **That here beside me stands,**
> **That round me, clasping each in each,**
> **She might have locked her hands.**
>
> **Yet seem'd the pressure twice as sweet**
> **As woodbine's fragile hold,**
> **Or when I feel about my feet**
> **The berried bryony fold."**

In "The Princess," there is no prettier simile than the comparison of bright, sportive, teasing Lilia, to a briar-rose:—

> **Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laughed,**
> **A rosebud set with little wilful thorns**
> **And sweet as English air could make her, she.**

The song of the Brook is the most perfect of all Tennyson's Nature-Studies. The poet has caught and successfully imitated the babbling, prattling voice and restless motion, like the voice and movements of a restless child, of the winding rivulet ever moving downwards "to join the brimming river." The very lines of its thirteen verses are so melodious that we scarcely need the delicious and most appropriate music of "Dolores" to sing them: they sing themselves, when well read. This is also the case with "Tears, idle Tears," and "The Bugle Song." There is no better testimony to their poetic beauty and to their fidelity to Nature than the fact that each verse has many times given mottoes to pictures by the last two generations of foremost artists. To my own sensations, when brain-wearied and sleepless, there is no more soothing sound than the purling of a brook or the lapping of the waves on the shore on a calm night: each kind of sound "hypnotizes," as it were, the nerve-centres of hearing, and natural, refreshing sleep comes on. The sensation produced by being within range of two sounds, each of water, one near and the other distant, is skilfully touched off in the "Idylls of the King."

> As one
> That listens near a torrent mountain-brook
> All through the crash of the near cataract, hears
> The drumming thunder of the huger fall
> At distance.

It is easy to perceive, after attaining a thorough knowledge of his poems, that the late Laureate's own favourite Nature-Study was the Sea in all its moods—the stormy state preferably. While at Freshwater Tennyson never missed a storm at sea, and scorned the deluge of rain that often accompanied it. From his experience of rough weather when crossing the North Sea to Norway he drew that suggestion which afforded so spirited a figure in "Lancelot and Elaine." The Knights of Lancelot's own kith and kin attack the stranger knight who overcame every antagonist, but concealed his name—in a body, they

> All together down upon him
> Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North Sea,
> Green-glimmering towards the summit, bears with all
> Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies
> Down on a barque, etc.

A memory of his visit to the Caves of Ballybunion, on the west coast of Ireland, gave this quaint illustration in "Merlin and Vivien":—

> he was mute:
> So dark a forethought roll'd about his brain,
> As on a dull day in an ocean cave
> The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall
> In silence.

Again, Merlin gives us a parable from the sea, on a calm bright day:—

> O did ye never lie upon the shore
> And watch the curl'd white of the coming wave
> Glass'd in the slippery sand before it breaks?

> Ev'n such a wave, though not so pleasurable,
> Dark in the glass of some presageful mood,
> Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.

The Lotus-Eaters, in accordance with their indolent natures, loved

> To watch the crisping ripples on the beach
> And tender curving lines of creamy spray.

On a breezy day we have all seen

> Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
> Torn from the fringe of spray.

One calm summer day, the poet evolved this exquisite Wordsworthian verse, while strolling along the cliffs that border Freshwater Bay:—

> O pleasant breast of waters! quiet bay,
> Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,
> Where the chafed breakers of the outer sea
> Sank powerless, as anger falls aside,
> And withers on the breast of peaceful love:
> Thou didst receive the growth of pines that fledged
> The hills that watch'd thee, as Love watcheth Love,
> In thine own essence, and delight thyself
> To make it wholly thine on sunny days.
> Keep thou thy name of "Lovers' Bay.

Yet from this same Lovers' Bay, when in storm, the poet gets that startling line,—explained by Professor Tyndall as due to the shapes of the sharp-edged flints, which emit a sharp sound on collision with each other, becoming a continuous noise when the retreating billow carries with it the shingle—

Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down
by the wave.

Even the phosphorescence of the sea is noticed by Tennyson. Look out for yourselves the passage in the "Coming of Arthur," where the babe is carried on the crest of a huge wave and safely deposited on the strand at the foot of Merlin the Mage, a wonderful billow which

All at once all round him rose in fire,
So that the child and he were clothed in fire.

I do not know any other poet who brings this natural phenomenon into his verse, except Coleridge in his "Ancient Mariner": of the water-snakes he says:—

Within the shadow of the ship
I watch'd their rich attire—
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black.
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

But I must not linger over the innumerable illustrations Tennyson gives us of the "divine sea," whose health-giving breezes often restored him. One more only I will mention, because of its singularity. It came to the poet's mind when bathing in shallow sea-water. Melissa, daughter of Lady Blanche, in "The Princess," stands

With her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,
As bottom agates seen to wave and float,
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

As to what are regarded as the "dry" sciences—Geology and Astronomy—Tennyson deserves the credit of having introduced their results, most happily, for the first time, into British poetry. Just as Ruskin has made mineralogy almost romantic in his matchlessly eloquent "Ethics of the Dust," so Tennyson has poetised these two sciences, and arrested the attention of the most casual and uninformed reader (who will learn more, voluntarily, afterwards, concerning the Earth and the Heavens) by his appropriate, accurate, and concise allusions. Take these two quotations only, out of a large number I have noted down. The first is from "In Memoriam":—

> The solid earth whereon we tread,
> In tracts of fluent heat began
> And grew to seeming random forms,
> The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
> Till at the last arose the man. . . . .
>
> There rolls the deep where grew the tree
> O Earth! what changes thou hast seen
> There, where the long street roars, hath been
> The stillness of the central sea.
> The hills are shadows, and they flow, &c., &c.

The second is the very condensed lecture by the Lady Principal of the College in "The Princess" on the origin of the Solar System:—

> This world was once a fluid haze of light,
> Till toward the centre set the starry tides,
> And eddied into suns, that, wheeling, cast
> The planets; then the monster, then the man,
> Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,
> Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate.

Next to the Ocean, the starry heavens were the favourite Nature-study of Tennyson. Almost all the constellations visible in the northern hemisphere, and most of the brighter stars and planets are brought into his larger poems,—Orion, seemingly, impressing him most of any. (The splendid Hymn to the Sun, in "Akbar's Dream," must not be forgotten.) Anyone can for himself by the use of a field-glass of moderate power verify this most original simile of the "Pleiades" star group:—

> **Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,**
> **Did I look on great Orion, sloping slowly to the West.**
> **Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the mellow shade**
> ***Glitter like a swarm of fireflies, tangled in a silver braid.***

Again, we have the mellifluous lines, full of the sweet sadness of night:—

> **When the face of the night is fair on the dewy downs,**
> **And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer**
> **And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns,**
> **Over Orion's grave, low down in the West.**

In the ornate imagery of "The Lady of Shalott" (recently set to charming music by Mr. Wilfred Bendall) the brilliance of Sir Lancelot's armour is only equalled by that of a "shooting star":—

> **All in the blue, unclouded weather,**
> **Thick-jewelled shone the saddle leather,**
> **The helmet and the helmet-feather**
> **Burn'd like one burning flame together,**
> **As he rode down to Camelot.**

> As often thro' the purple night,
> Below the starry clusters bright,
> Some bearded meteor, trailing light
> Moves over still Shalott.

And again, a splendid and accurate metaphor in "The Princess," where the helmets of Arac and his two captains dazzle the crowd of onlookers:—

> As the beam
> Of the East that play'd upon them, made them glance
> Like those three stars of the airy Giant's Zone
> That glitter, burnish'd by the frosty dark;
> And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
> And bickers into red and emerald, shone
> Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

The poet's son Lionel had this name given to him because of the circumstance that his father was gazing with intense delight on the red planet Mars

> As he glowed like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

on the night of March 16th, 1878, when the birth took place, and the good news was announced to the Laureate.

The revelations of great telescopes always fascinated Tennyson, whose mind was large enough to grasp and enjoy the infinitely great as keenly as the infinitely minute in Nature.

The noble verses which appeared in the *first* edition of "The Palace of Art," but were deleted subsequently by the fastidiousness of the poet, deserve quotation here, as a very clever poetical summary of the chief marvels of

the telescope. The "Moonless Mars" of the original lines was altered into its present form after the discovery by Professor Hall, U.S., of the two tiny satellites of Mars, *Deinos* and *Phobos,* in 1877. The builder of the Palace of Art has made herself an Observatory tower:—

> Hither, when all the deep, unsounded skies
> Shudder'd with silent stars, she clomb,
> And as with optic glasses, her keen eyes
> Pierced through the mystic dome
>
> Regions of lucid matter taking forms,
> Brushes of fire, hazy gleams,
> Clusters and beds of worlds, and bee-like swarms
> Of suns and starry streams
>
> She saw the snowy poles *and Moons of Mars;*
> That mystic field of drifted light
> In mid-Orion, and the married stars . . .

If we could have the principal facts and laws of "popular" (as distinct from mathematical) astronomy put before us in this charming way, this science would be more studied by the people, and many more families would possess and enjoy an "optic glass." Blending, as he did, the love of scientific law and minute accuracy with fervent fancy and infinitely-varied poetic expression, Tennyson might, had he so willed, have become an eloquent professor of any branch of science. But he early found that his calling was that of a poet, and he departed not from it.

As precious stones are natural products, though usually improved by art, I might mention that Tennyson

in his earlier, more ornate poems—those influenced by Keats and Shelley—uses fourteen of them as illustrations—the diamond being the most frequent. Two examples will suffice to show how deftly they are introduced. In the Idyll, "Gareth and Lynette," the three Daughters of the Dawn have their hair

> **All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem**
> **Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.**

And when Vivien in the storm embraces Merlin and calls him "her dear protector,"

> **The *pale blood* of the wizard at her touch**
> **Took *gayer colours like an opal warmed.***

Here we are reminded of the quaint old superstitions in "*Euphues: His England.*"*

It would protract this lecture to an inordinate length were I to quote any more of Tennyson's Nature-Studies,—such as the clouds at sunrise and sunset; the tropical scenery of Enoch Arden's lone island; the bits of Spain, Portugal, Greece, Crete, the Mediterranean coast, and so on, vividly portrayed, always in strict keeping with the subject, scene, or action of the poem. Of some descriptive lines the poet himself was proud, such as—

> *The league-long roller thundering on the reef.*
> *Universal ocean softly washing all her warless isles.*

---

* See the Author's "Study of Euphuism."

And this brings me to the subject of the *melody* of Tennyson's poetry, which is more marked in his work than in that of some great poets—for example, Browning. Of three of his lines in "The Princess," describing, most gracefully, a Swiss Valley (Lauterbrunnen?)—

> **Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn,**
> **The moan of doves in immemorial elms,**
> **And murmuring of innumerable bees.**

Charles Kingsley wrote, "After three such lines who will talk of English as a harsh and clumsy language, and seek in the effeminate and monotonous Italian for expressive melody of sound?"

The *making of sound-effects by words* was called by the Greeks *onomatopœia* in their condensed, epigrammatic style: and there is much of this *onomatopœia* in Tennyson. Above, I have given one example imitative of the sound of (a) rivulet, (b) doves, (c) bees. Let us take that little song, founded on the phrase "Far, far away," which thrilled the poet all his life long, he tells us:—

> **What sound was dearest in his native dells?**
> **The mellow *lin-lan-lone* of evening bells**
> **Far, far away!**

Again, that thoroughly musical quatrain in "Maud":

> **All night have the roses heard**
> ***The flute, violin, bassoon,***
> **All night has the jessamine casement stirred**
> **To the *dancers dancing in tune.***

Lastly, there is a clever *onomatopœia* in the poem, "Sea-Dreams." The hero, a city clerk, relates to his wife his remarkable dream-vision of a fleet of ships made of glass sailing on to their destruction on a hidden reef of gold. In his dream he waved his arm to them, as he thought, to warn them of their danger, but it was

> **An idle signal, for the brittle fleet**
> ***Touched, clinked,* and *clashed,* and vanished**
> **And I woke,**
> **I heard the *clash* so clearly.**

Tennyson seldom permits a break or a halt in the metrical symmetry for which he is noted. There is one exceptional line in "Locksley Hall" (line 26)—

> **As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the Northern night.**

He knows the value of alliteration in emphasizing lines, such as

> ***Wild* bird, whose *warble,* liquid *sweet.***

and

> ***A life that leads melodious days.***

By constantly repeating every new poem aloud, he discovered its defects, and corrected them. The poet, with his keen and musical ear, lamented the prevalence of the sibilant sounds in our mother-tongue, and polished his lines over and over again, in order to avoid a sequence of "*S's.*" He much preferred any consonant rather than "s" for alliteration. The letter "l,"—that figures so melodiously in all the pure languages of the Latin

group—is Tennyson's favourite. For example, take these lines, chosen casually from "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After":—

> **I that loathed have come to love him. Love will conquer at the last . . .**
>
> **Then I leave thee Lord and Master, latest Lord of Locksley Hall.**

In Tennyson the educated reader finds classic, mediæval, old-English, present-day English, compound words newly minted by the poet, and scientific words: all showing his wide culture and extensive knowledge, but sometimes needing an interpreter. The Rev. Henry Van Dyke, of New York, is one of the most luminous of these interpreters of Tennyson. He has pointed out that in his use of double words, our late Laureate imitated Milton. He gives a long list of some fifty double-epithets and objects, as an exercise, from which to test the reader's knowledge of both poets. But this excessive *ornament* (for so it is) Tennyson gradually dropped in favour of more simple phrases, except in "Enoch Arden," where he seems to have revived the Shelleyism of his youth, in the gorgeous tropical scenes; and in his Miltonic double words of description: "hollower-bellowing ocean," "portal-warding lion-whelp," &c.

Taken as a whole, the Laureate's collected poems illustrate the strength, variety, and flexibility of the English language—our noble mother-tongue which assimilates words from both the Occident and the Orient, and

from all the sciences, and which grows so rapidly that in ten years' time the "latest" Dictionary is not completely "up to date." Unfortunately slang from foreign, colonial, and transatlantic sources is also absorbed, and figures rather too largely in "newspaper English." For instance, the terms (convenient no doubt) "larrikin" and "hooligan" seem to be now legitimate expressions. Let us all, however, strive, as Tennyson did, to keep "the well of English undefiled."

We may indeed justly add Tennyson's poems to the classics of English of the Victorian Era. He has added to the resources of future poets many graceful compound words, Old English expressions, and local Lincolnshire dialect-words of antiquarian value.

In my third part I shall refer to this last point more fully. In order to illustrate the great variety of subject, tone, mood, and expression to be found in Tennyson, I will give four passages which strongly contrast with one another.

1.—From "Maud" (the hyperbolical language of fervent love):—

> **My bride to be, my evermore delight,**
> **My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell!**

2.—From "The Princess" (scientific law):—

> **But when your sister came, she won the heart**
> **Of Ida: they were still together, grew**
> **(For so they said themselves) inosculated,**
> **Consŏnant chords that shiver to one note,**
> **One mind in all things.**

3.—From "Gareth and Lynette" (naturalistic):—

> She thereat, as one
> That smells a foul-fleshed agaric in the holt
> And deems it carrion of some woodland thing
> Or shrew or weasel, nipt her slender nose
> With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling, "Hence!"

4.—From "The May Queen" (A Christian's faith in view of death):—

> For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—
> And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come—
> To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—
> "And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."
> —(Job iii, 17).

The art of clothing profound and even subtle thoughts in simple and terse language is not peculiar to Tennyson, but is the striking element in his best poems, giving even an austerity to some passages. How simple are the words in which, for instance, he expresses the innocent love of the pure maiden Elaine for Sir Lancelot:—

> I know not if I know what true love is,
> But if I know, then, if I love not him
> I know there is none other I can love.

Like the monosyllabic passages in our Authorised Version of the Psalms and of Job, lines like these are simplicity itself, yet full of thought. "Dead languages are embalmed," said the great poet once, in conversation with Sir Edwin Arnold, "but when languages endure, they change." We can all assent to this: a dead

language is to a living language as a crystal is to a growing tree:" but I, for one, cannot agree to what followed. Tennyson continued, "The time will come when you and I, Arnold, will be as difficult for Englishmen to read and understand as Chaucer is to-day." On the contrary, just as we can all understand the English Bible of 1611, except a few obsolete words, so, I firmly believe, Tennyson's works will remain intelligible as long as our language exists.

Having shown, by abundance of quotation, how the Laureate regarded the Microcosm of Nature, I must now draw to a conclusion, with a few lines of prophecy, uttered in his old age, concerning Nature's Macrocosm. These are from the poem, "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After,"—(changing two words to make the meaning clearer)—

> **Many an Æon moulded earth before her highest, Man, was born,**
> **Many an Æon too may pass when earth is man-less and forlorn,**
>
> **Earth so huge, and yet so bounded . . . . . .**
>
> **Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth will be**
> **Something other than the wildest modern guess of you and me.**
>
> **Only *He Who* made us meant us to be mightier by and by,**
> **Set the sphere of all the boundless Heavens within the human eye,**
>
> **Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, through the human soul**
> **Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward, in the Whole.**

The sure grasp of a personal God-Creator, the profound knowledge of and love for the laws of His Creation, and an intimate acquaintance with human

nature are blended in the works of this great poet with minute, picturesque, and accurate description of the animate and inanimate component parts of Nature. So that I have thought, many a time, that a holiday in the country or by the sea-side might be rendered all the more enjoyable by a study of his poems from the point of view I have taken in this lecture: namely—

TENNYSON AS A POET OF NATURE.

From the snowy Alpine summits to the dreary moorland lea,
From the gently-rippling brooklet to the angry-roaring sea,
Thou didst draw the Nature spirit, and thy poet's eye and ear
Caught the colours and the music of the seasons of the year.
Nature's whispers, Nature's thunders, Nature's frowns and smiles and tears,
In thy glowing verse are mingled with the Chorus of the Spheres.

II.—Tennyson as a National Poet.

(First delivered January 17th, 1898.)

From the earliest dawn of Aryan history, when "Homer sang how hapless Troy was lost," seldom has a nation possessing a written language lacked a succession of poets who from age to age of its career have sung of the great deeds of its heroes, of the beauties of its land; of its episodes of war and of peace; singers who have created its popular songs, or who have embalmed its folk-lore in fiery or pathetic, rugged, or melodious verse. As civilisation becomes more complex and more elaborate, the poetry of past ages seems to us mere school-learning; yet we owe to ancient Greece, and to the Augustan age of Rome, the classical models upon which all later verse is framed, and the standard by which we measure the merit of our modern poets.

Let us inquire what we mean exactly by the term "national" as applied to a poet, for every poet must belong to some nationality or other.

For the purposes of this lecture, I limit the adjective "national" to a poet whose compositions have these four characteristics:—1. They are sung, written, or printed in the vernacular language of his country. 2. They reflect the contemporary life and current ideas of the period

when the poet wrote. 3. They were known and esteemed by his fellow countrymen during his lifetime. 4. They are of such intrinsic merit as to have survived the author, and to have become an essential part of the national literature of his country.

Truly national poets have indeed a noble function to perform. As their Greek name (poiētēs) signifies, they are *makers* or *creators*. They create for their readers word-pictures of all that is beautiful, true, pure, and noble, alluring the idle to industry, the vicious to virtue, the rich to charity, and the honest toiler to higher ideals of life. They throw the halo of romance around the commonplace events of life; they denounce tyranny, oppression, and moral wrong in every form; they widen the conception of the rights of the individual; and they arouse in a down-trodden nation an irresistible demand for freedom.

National poets of even limited powers have written songs such as the *Marseillaise* and the *Wacht am Rhein*, which have run like lightning through the people, and have been worth more than thousands of warriors to a popular cause. Some poets—Tyrtæus, Uhland, and Körner, for example—have fought and bled for their country on the battlefield. Freedom-loving poets have even passed their own frontiers, and fanned into flame the dying spark of patriotism in foreign countries. Who can doubt that the independence of modern Greece was

greatly hastened on by the personal efforts and soul-stirring poetry of our own Byron and Shelley?

> **And here the singer for his Art**
> **Not all in vain may plead,**
> **The song that nerves a nation's heart**
> **Is in itself a deed.**

Our own island-kingdom is fortunate in its records of native-born national poets. Taking "Piers Plowman"—that is, probably, William Langland (1350)—as our first truly "national" poet, the Sacred Fire of Apollo has been handed down through five centuries to our own time by an illustrious procession of men of genius, the latest of whom were Wordsworth, Browning, and Tennyson.

Let us rejoice that our "national" poets have, on the whole, had an influence for good. Very rarely has any of them taught sedition, immorality, or atheism. As a rule, they have preached loyalty to the crown; public and private morality; civil and religious liberty; belief in God; trust in honest statesmen; and adherence to the grand old constitutional principles of the *Magna Charta*. Poets have helped, not hindered, Britain's development into what she is at present,—the freest country in the world:—

> **A land of settled government,**
> **A land of just and old renown,**
> **Where freedom slowly broadens down,**
> **From precedent to precedent.**
>
> **Where faction seldom gathers head,**
> **But by degrees to fulness wrought.**
> **The strength of some diffusive thought,**
> **Hath time and space to work and spread.**

The three great Hierarchs of English poetry are Shakspere, Milton, and Tennyson. Each of these great poets saw, with prophetic vision, far beyond his own age. But each of them also gathered together, as it were, in his works, the spirit, life, manners, and sayings of his age; each constructed dramas out of history (in Milton's case Sacred History) which contained moral teaching for all time; and each created pure and lofty ideals for both citizen and state. In the sacredness of his principal theme, and in the unsurpassable stateliness and point of his blank verse, Milton ranks next to Shakspere, while Tennyson, though inferior to both in dramatic power, yet surpasses both in his lyric poetry, and in the more complete portrayal of his age,—this complex nineteenth century.

Though we almost instinctively regard Shakspere as *facile princeps* of all English poets, I am inclined to go further, and place him alone, on a pedestal by himself. It seems to me no exaggeration to say that "none but himself can be his parallel."

His wondrous knowledge of Man, and his all-powerful dramatic presentment of every phase and emotion of human life, cause the creatures of his imagination to be regarded as historic personalities; and their impressive phrases have become rooted in the speech of humanity. The fruits of our Shakspere's colossal genius are by this time shared with us by every nation which possesses a literature. Already, his works are studied in more lan-

guages than any others, except the Bible. Even Oriental nations are appropriating him; for Shakspere can now be enjoyed by the Armenian and the Japanese, each in his own language.

Whether a fame of like duration awaits Tennyson's works in this restless, ever changing age, it is not for me to say, but it is certain that the Laureate, in his friend Gladstone's words, "has written his own song in the hearts of his countrymen that can never die," and it is probable that, for centuries to come, "Time will be powerless against him" (*Life*, vol. ii., p. 281).

In this, my second "Study of Tennyson," I wish to present him in the threefold aspect of a typical Englishman; a thoughtful and far-sighted patriot; and as *a*, perhaps *the*, *representative* National Poet of the Victorian era. I am the better enabled to do this by the help of the admirable and long-desired Biography of Tennyson written by his son, assisted by his widow, and published on the fifth anniversary of his death, October 6th, 1897. The two handsome volumes which doubtless are familiar to all present by this time, form a noble monument, erected by wifely and filial love, to the memory of our greatest Laureate, the most devoted of husbands, and the best of fathers. Not only does this *Life* exhibit Tennyson as the poet, conceiving, sifting, elaborating, and re-polishing his exquisite verses: it also shows us Tennyson as the man, loveable and beloved in every human relationship; Tennyson the patriot, with

prophetic eye gauging his country's future; and Tennyson the Christian philosopher, passing through clouds of doubt and suffering into the serene faith of his latter days.

In the poet's character and domestic life this book reveals many gracious qualities hitherto unknown, or barely conjectured, while his eccentricities of manner are satisfactorily explained. Without the slightest violation of good taste, the reader is admitted into the sanctities of the poet's home, of his intimate friendships, and of his inner thought. We understand, now, the causes of his fits of gloom and morbid love of solitude; of his illnesses; of his real sympathy (with which few credited him) for the toiling masses, arising from his essential kindness of heart, and recollection of his long years of poverty and self-denial. We read in these pages of his financial ruin by a friend in 1844; of his wise and loving management of his father's orphaned family; of his waiting twenty years for his bride, Emily Sellwood; of his artistic talent; of his generosity, after he had risen, to poor authors; of his keen sense of humour; of his genial talk and pithy anecdotes; of his sagacious views of political and social questions; of his humorous criticisms; and of the affectionate regard shown to him for thirty years by his Sovereign. By a judicious selection from over forty thousand letters, the biographer has enabled us to see the influence of Tennyson upon the leading men of his time—extending over two genera-

tions—and upon contemporary poets, of whom only Philip Bailey, Aubrey de Vere, and A. C. Swinburne now remain.

The great blank in this *Life of Lord Tennyson* is the absence of all letters from the poet to his dearest friend, Arthur Hallam. These were all destroyed by Arthur's father, Henry Hallam, the historian, whose hatred of biographies was almost as intense as Tennyson's. There is sufficient unpublished poetry in this work to fill one of the small green volumes of the past, and much of it is of high value. Hallam, Lord Tennyson, carried out his father's instructions to consult with the six literary friends he designated, to choose what was to be published. Thus he gratified one of his father's last wishes, "for God's sake, let those who love us edit us after death." This biography will rank with the greatest biographies of England's worthies, and the whole world of readers ought to feel grateful to the present Lord Tennyson, not only for the very successful execution of a difficult task, but because it is to his loving persistence that we owe the boon of any authentic life of our great Laureate at all.*

Let us view Tennyson first, then, as a typical Englishman. Now, as we are a very mixed race, and

*Lord Tennyson, with whom the author has had much cordial correspondence, writes, Jan. 15th, 1898. . . . "The tributes to his greatness, which reach me now, daily, from all parts of the world, are overwhelmingly touching."

heredity is a great factor in personality, the genealogy of the poet is of distinct interest. The "Tenisons" were originally Danes who settled north of the Humber. Their descendants in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries married into Norman families—D'Eyncourt, for example—and in the eighteenth century, Saxon connections came in, as the names Chapman and Clayton indicate. Alfred Tennyson may have derived his dark southern complexion, eyes, and hair from a Huguenot ancestor. Thus, it is possible that he inherited the Norseman's love for the sea; the Norman's pride of ancestry; and the Saxon common-sense, stability, and love of home; while his indomitable will and his magnificent creative genius were all his own.

In his unpublished verses *To the Queen*, 1851, he wrote—

> **The noblest men, methinks, are bred**
> **Of ours, the Saxo-Norman race.**

And Tennyson could feel a peculiarly personal interest in his joyous *Welcome* to the bride of the Prince of Wales (now, 1901, our graceful and still beautiful Queen Alexandra)—

> **Saxon, and Norman, and Dane are we**
> **But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee**
> **Alexandra!**

The ten portraits, taken at various periods in his life, which illustrate the biography, give us a definite idea of Tennyson's face and head, but not of his dark olive

complexion, and Spanish, Provençal, or Gipsy-like appearance. For my Frontispiece I have selected G. F. Watts's picture, taken in 1859, as most characteristic of Carlyle's vivid sketch of the poet, written for R. W. Emerson sixteen years previously.:—"One of the finest men in the world. A great shock of rough, dusky-dark hair; bright, laughing hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive, yet most delicate; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy; smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical, metallic, fit for loud laughter, and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous: I do not meet in these late decades such company over a pipe!" This portrait by Watts was called by his friends "the great moonlight portrait of the Bard."

His athletic stature and strength; his reserve to strangers; his intense dislike to make a speech; his gruffness, and his way of frankly blurting out what was in his mind—these are common defects of an Englishman. But the shyness carried to such a morbid extent as it was with Tennyson was personal, not racial.

When on his famous cruise in the *Pembroke Castle*, the poet gave his son a curious and very original explanation of his shyness before a crowd. He said, "I am never the least shy before great men. Each of *them* has a personality for which he is responsible, but before a *crowd*, which consists of many personalities, of whom I

know nothing, I am infinitely shy. I think of the good man, and the bad man, and the mad man that may be among them, and can say nothing." Then, referring to his companion, Mr. Gladstone, he added, "The great orator thinks nothing about all this, he takes them all as one man. He sways them as one man."

An English, or, perhaps, a Scandinavian trait in our great poet was his intense love of personal freedom. Conventionality was to him bondage. He demanded freedom of speech, of movement, of dress, and of manners; liberty to be alone when he wished; to wander about at all times; and to smoke everywhere. It is amusing to read how Mr. Gladstone was disturbed in mind when he was offering the peerage to Tennyson in 1883, lest the poet should insist on wearing his bandit-like sombrero in the august chamber of Peers!

In one habit or taste, Tennyson was "un-English." He had no love for what is called "sport." He neither shot, hunted, nor fished. He had a woman's tenderness for all the lower creation, both animal and vegetable. But in his intense love for the country, Tennyson was a typical Englishman of rural birth and training. He was English, too, in his hatred of shams, of exaggerations, and of artificialities. When continental travel had rubbed off some prejudices natural to the stay-at-home Englishman, Tennyson gained a juster appreciation of the foreigner. Yet, like the average Englishman, he thanks

Heaven for "the silver streak" which separates us from our traditional enemy, France.

> **God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,**
> **And keeps our Britain whole within herself,**
> **A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled.**

Like the typical Anglo-Saxon of strong will, Tennyson was slow in forming an opinion on subjects of importance, but very tenacious of it, once it was formed. And thus also was it with his friendships, which were for life. The love of liberty in Tennyson included civil, political, and national liberty. The kind of freedom he preferred for his country is that "sober freedom" won by constitutional means, and kept by sobriety of judgment, respect for the law, and mutual compromise, which England now enjoys in a fuller measure than any other nation. He dreaded an outbreak of the revolutionary spirit of France, of what he stigmatises as

> **The red fool-fury of the Seine.**

During the troublous years that preceded the Reform Bill of 1832, when the rick-burners were at work, and when King William IV. dared not even enter the City of London to dine with the Lord Mayor (in 1830) for fear of personal violence, he deprecated repressing the Chartists and Reformers by arrest and imprisonment, but urged with all his energy the improvement of the dwellings of the poor, free education, increased activity of Christian philanthropy, partial free trade, and less party

spirit in the press. He was certainly a Liberal in those days, yet he declared himself at this time,

> Wed to no faction in the State.

All his life he denounced political rancour, and deprecated even the existence of antagonistic parties, as in his poem of 1831, entitled *The Statesman*:—

> Ill fares a people, passion-wrought,
> A land of many days that cleaves
> In two great halves, when each one leaves
> The middle road of sober thought!

Throughout his long life Tennyson showed his hatred of tyranny, and his sympathy for nations struggling for freedom, so long as massacre, anarchy, and destruction of private property did *not* form part of the process of its attainment. Some critics have asserted that the poet's calm and dispassionate estimate of liberty contrasts but poorly with Browning's generous enthusiasm for the leaders of revolt against oppression, often men who fell before victory came, men who on the battle-field or on the scaffold poured out for their country—

> The last libation that liberty draws
> From the heart that bleeds and breaks in her cause.

And they remind us that the excesses of the French revolution, the rising of a whole nation against the brutal feudalism of many centuries, should not blind the poet's eyes against the inalienable right of rebellion against

proved wrongs and oppressions. But Tennyson, at the age of twenty-one, put his life in his hand to assist the Spaniards in revolt under Torrijos, in 1830, thus showing most practically his sympathy with a just cause. In later life he received Garibaldi, the liberator of Italy, with great enthusiasm; and General Gordon, who freed the Soudan for a time—alas! too short—found the most cordial of welcomes at Farringford. The Laureate's spirited Sonnet on Montenegro (1877) inspired by Mr. Gladstone's description of the country and its famous history, is a fine tribute to that indomitable race—

> **They kept their faith, their freedom, on the height**
> **Chaste, frugal, savage, armed by day and night . . .**
> **O smallest among peoples! rough rock-throne**
> **Of freedom, warriors beating back the swarm**
> **Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years.**
> **Great Tsernagora! never since thine own**
> **Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm**
> **Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers.**

Nobly has this gallant people reminded us of the poet's grand thought, expressed in his drama, *The Cup*—

> **In wars of freedom and defence**
> **The glory and grief of battle won or lost**
> ***Solders a race together.***

The spirit of this Sonnet carries on that of Wordsworth in his famous Sonnets to Liberty, wherein the gallant Andreas Hofer, Toussaint l'Ouverture, Palafox and others, received worthy tributes of praise from an English poet who loved freedom, but utterly abandoned

the cause of French "Liberté" after the massacres of September, 1792.

See also how Tennyson expresses the very essence of altruistic heroism in these lines from that singular self-questioning poem, *The Two Voices.* The good voice urges the life-weary hero—

> To pass, when Life her light withdraws
> Not void of righteous self-applause
> Not in a merely selfish cause—
>
> In some good cause, not in mine own,
> To perish wept for, honour'd, known,
> And like a warrior overthrown;
>
> Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
> When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears
> His country's war-song thrill his ears.
>
> Then, dying of a mortal stroke,
> What time the foeman's line is broke
> And all the war is rolled in smoke.

When freedom is crushed, and can only be restored by war, Tennyson heartily cheers on its warrior, but he must have a *righteous* cause, and he dreads, above all, the tyranny of the mob, when led by Communists, whom he describes as—

> Men loud against all forms of power
> Unfurnished brows, tempestuous tongues
> Expecting all things in an hour,
> Brass mouths, and iron lungs.

He repeatedly warns us against the dangers of an armed revolutionary populace who would indeed leave us only—

Freedom free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name.

Tennyson, however, knows *when to asssert popular rights by force*, as in his indignant remonstrance against the attempted gagging of our Press by the House of Lords, in 1852, lest the bitter reproaches of refugee Frenchmen and our own Liberals against Napoleon III. for his despotic usurpation of power by the *coup d'etat* should bring on war with France—

As long as we remain, we must speak free
Tho' all the storm of Europe on us break.

. . . . . .

What! have we fought for freedom from our prime
At last to dodge and falter with a public crime?

Shall we fear *him*? Our own we never feared.
From our first Charles by force we wrung our claims,
Prick'd by the Papal spur, we reared,
We flung the burthen of the second James.
I say, we *never* feared! and, as for these
We broke them on the land, we drove them on the seas.

The glowing patriotism which pervades Tennyson's poems was firmly rooted in his inmost being. With him it was a passion, not a mere sentiment. Yet its quality was made wiser and more discriminating by his fairness of mind, his intense love of truth, his clear perception of our national failings, and his desire to be just even to our national enemies.

"True patriotism is rare," he once observed, "the love of country which makes a man defend his landmarks,

that we all have, and the Anglo-Saxon more than most other races: but the patriotism that declines to link itself with the small fry of the passing hour for political advantage—that is rare, I say. The Duke of Wellington had both kinds of patriotism." The Earl of Chatham, father of William Pitt, who protested with his dying breath against the war which cost England her American colonies, had the latter and rarer kind of patriotism.

No poet ever filled the court appointment of Poet Laureate with such patriotism, loyalty, and independence of spirit. Tennyson would have been the first to denounce in powerful verse any infraction by the sovereign of the rights of the people. In him the "patriotism of instinct," born and bred within him, combined with the "patriotism of reason," ably defined by Mr. Chamberlain in his recent Glasgow address; and both were intensified by that profound admiration for the classic heroes of Greece and Rome which formed a part of what he called "the Passion of the Past." Take that magnificent outburst of patriotism which is now one of our most treasured English classics,—the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.* How perfectly does the poet interweave the characters and glorious deeds of the Iron Duke and of the gallant Nelson with moral lessons derived from our past achievement of national freedom, and with earnest advice how to maintain it unimpaired! To my mind the pith of this grand poem lies in the couplet—

Not once or twice, in our fair island-story
The path of duty was the way to glory.

If we review England's countless "little wars," as they are called, in the light of these lines, we shall condemn some of them, despite our admiration of the deeds of heroism that attended them, because they were *outside our path of duty, therefore unrighteous*, and therefore disastrous in their end.

Quite in the patriotic spirit of Sir Walter Scott's famous lines, "Breathes there the man with soul so dead," etc., is Tennyson's early sonnet, "Love thou thy Land," which Wordsworth praised as "solid and noble in thought, and stately in diction."

Love thou thy land with love far-brought
From out the storied past, and used
Within the present, but transfused
Through future time by power of thought.

True love, turn'd round on fixéd poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers, and immortal souls.

A new phase of Tennyson's genius appeared in 1852, when there was current throughout England a not-unfounded fear of invasion by France under the scheming Napoleon III., who was seeking to divert the indignation of French patriots from his cruel usurpation of power, and to reward his army, which had been the instrument of his *coup d'etat*. Several *National Songs for Englishmen*, of which "Britons, Guard your Own" and "Hands all

Round" are the most spirited, were published by the Laureate in the London *Examiner*. These songs did not rouse the public much, not being written in metre suitable for popular music, and only three of them were reprinted by the author in his subsequent volumes of poems. From the later version of "Hands all Round" Tennyson omitted one of the best verses, the appeal to the United States in case of our invasion by a foreign power. It runs thus:

> Gigantic daughter of the West,
> We drink to thee across the flood
> We know thee most, we love thee best
> For art thou not of British blood?
> Should war's mad blast again be blown,
> Permit not thou the tyrant powers
> To fight thy mother here alone,
> But let thy broadsides roar with ours
> Hands all round!
> God the tyrant's cause confound!
> To our great kinsmen of the West, my friends,
> And the great name of England round and round!

Tennyson believed in recognising the solidarity of the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race.

We should have had many martial songs from Tennyson had he condescended to write for popularity, and to make money. But even in his days of poverty he refused the repeated solicitations of his friends to write short, popular pieces in the magazines. He published only what he thought was worthy of himself, and for the good of the public. "Popularity," he said in later life,

" is a bastard fame which sometimes goes with the more real thing, but is independent of, and somewhat antagonistic to it." He was evidently not of the opinion of that " wise man " quoted by Fletcher of Saltoun, who said, " Give me the making of the ballads of a nation, and I care not who makes their laws." The truth is that, as in the case of hymns, which he steadily declined to compose, though Jowett and others urged him often, Tennyson *could not* and *would not* be " commonplace," as he called it.

It is a curious fact that, with the exception of " Rule Britannia," written by James Thomson, of " The Seasons " fame, and " Ye Mariners of England " by Thomas Campbell, none of our English patriotic or truly " national " songs have been the work of a great or even eminent poet. Mr. S. J. A. Fitzgerald, in the prolonged controversy over the origin and authorship of " God Save the King," has satisfied me that the words and music of our National Anthem, great from its very simplicity and massive harmonies, were the work of Henry Carey (1696-1743),—a great composer indeed, but not a poet. The national songs, David Garrick's " Hearts of Oak," S. J. Arnold's " Death of Nelson " (with John Braham's music); Dibdin's " Tom Bowling;" " The Bay of Biscay;" " The Anchor's Weighed;" and the immortal " Home, Sweet Home " (whose author, J. Howard Payne, died in an almshouse) are " commonplace," but have struck deep roots into our hearts.

Nevertheless, that our Laureate *could* write a simple song in a rattling metre suitable for a catching tune, is proved by his unpublished "Song for Sailors," called *Jack Tar*, written in 1859, of which I quote one verse—

They say some foreign powers have laid their heads together
To break the pride of Britain, and bring her on her knees.
There's a treaty, so they tell us, of some dishonest fellows
To break the noble pride of the Mistress of the Seas.
Up, Jack Tars, and save us,
The whole world shall not brave us!
Up, and save the pride of the Mistress of the Seas.

To Tennyson it was both a duty and a pleasure to record the noble deeds of arms of our soldiers and sailors in poetry worthy of them. Accordingly, we have those immortal, soul-stirring pieces from his pen—"The Charge of the Light Brigade," the "Defence of Lucknow," and the "Revenge." It was far from his intention to make us a nation of Jingoes, but he felt that we Britons, who live in this peaceful land, being free as yet (thank God!) from the compulsory military service of other nations, ought to be often reminded of the gallant deeds of the brave men who serve their country with such self-sacrificing devotion, by day and night, in all weathers and in all climates, however rigorous or deadly.

When Rudyard Kipling drops his barrack-room slang, (of which we have had enough) and writes in his best mood of inspiration such poems as "Our Lady of the Snows," "The Flag of England," and the "Recessional,"

I feel that the mantle of Tennyson, as a soldier's poet, has fallen upon his shoulders. It is interesting to note in the *Life* (ii, 392) that one verse of Tennyson's unpublished Dedication, "To the Queen," 1851, is the epitome of Kipling's inspiring "Flag of England," printed in 1891, which the aged Laureate read and praised.

This verse runs as follows; it is a condensed poem:—

> **Your name is blown on every wind,**
> **Your flag through Austral ice is borne**
> **And glimmers to the Northern morn**
> **And floats in either golden Ind.**

I would that the younger poet's "Flag of England" and "Recessional" were printed in every school book of poetry throughout Great Britain. Rudyard Kipling is just now *the* poet of Greater Britain. He has done for India and the Colonies what Burns did for Scotland: he has been the first poet since Tennyson to reveal to us the full glory of our Imperial heritage. Such poets help to keep our Colonists loyal, for in terse and vigorous language they express the thoughts the *Greater Britons themselves did not know that they cherished.*

Now Tennyson has not escaped severe criticism for the expressions of war-feeling in the poem of "Maud." But I well remember how the anti-Russian sentiment pervaded the whole country during the Crimean war,—that huge blunder into which we were cajoled by Louis Napoleon for his own purposes; and of course the Laureate shared it. I admit that, seeing that John

Bright, a worthy and consistent statesman and the leader of the peace party, was a Quaker, that phrase in "Maud," "a broad-brimmed hawker of holy things," whose "ear is crammed with his cotton," was an unfortunate one. The poet afterwards explained that no personality whatever was intended, but only a general condemnation of the opponents of the war. He also called attention to his limitation of justifiable war in the last canto of the poem, where the hero says:

> I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
> Are scarcely even akin.

But further, in order to explain his principles as to war and peace, Tennyson wrote a delightful little epilogue to his "Charge of the Heavy Brigade," in the form of a dialogue between Irene (Peace) and the Poet. Irene reproaches the Poet thus:

> You praise when you should blame
> The barbarism of wars—
> A juster epoch has begun.

The Poet answers:

> You wrong me, passionate little friend,
> I would that wars should cease;
> I would the globe from end to end
> Might sow and reap in peace . . .
>
> Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all
> My friends and brother souls,
> With all the peoples, great and small,
> That wheel beneath the poles. . . .

But there are occasions, the Poet goes on to say, when a man

> . . . . Needs must fight
> To make true peace his own:
> He needs must combat might with might
> Or Might would rule alone;
> And who loves War for War's own sake
> Is fool, or crazed, or worse;
> But let the patriot-soldier take
> His meed of fame in verse.

I think you will agree with me that this is a reasonable and eloquent defence. And any impartial mind will recognise, in studying Tennyson's collected poems, that the author of "The Golden Year," the English "Idylls," and the two "Locksley Halls" must have loved peace and all its accompanying blessings. Although he sometimes said, "Peace at all price implies war at all cost," he personally hated war, and longed with his whole soul for that millennial time

> When the war-drum throbs no longer, and the battle flags are furled,
> In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World:
> Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion killed,
> Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert tilled,
> Robed in universal harvest, up to either Pole she smiles;
> Universal ocean softly washing all her warless isles.

Meantime, however, while the continent of Europe is an armed camp, with its six Great Powers ready to place twelve millions of trained soldiers in the field should war break out, we cannot expect to attain this

happy condition before wading through an Armageddon of blood.

And now let us briefly glance at Tennyson's most popular war-song, which is recited with applause to this day, and which perhaps in another generation may be the sole popular memorial of the Crimean war—"The Charge of the Light Brigade." The poet wrote it in a few minutes—a pure inspiration—basing it upon the number, six hundred, of the troopers engaged, and the phrase in the *Times* report of the Battle of Balaclava, "someone had blundered." Its very metre is admirably suggestive of a charge of horsemen, eager and impetuous, yet rhythmical.*

From its wonderfully inspiriting effect on our soldiers, who were then suffering great hardships, and dying in numbers from disease, exposure and privation rather than from slaughter in battle, Tennyson has been called "the Tyrtæus of the War." "The greatest service you can do," wrote an army chaplain to the S.P.G. Society, "is to send out Tennyson's 'Charge at Balaclava.' It is the greatest favourite with the soldiers; half are singing it, and all want it in black and white." Among the many good stories told in the *Life of Tennyson* of the bracing effect of this piece, I have only space for one. Some years after the conclusion of peace with Russia, an American clergyman wrote to Tennyson, telling him of

* "Half a league, half a league, half a league onward," etc.

a singular experience of his own. One Sunday, when he was in his pulpit and about to preach his sermon, overmastered by an uncontrollable impulse, he recited "The Charge of the Light Brigade"—to the great scandal and indignation, naturally, of his congregation. Some days later a man called upon him and said, "Sir, I am one of the survivors of the Balaclava Charge. I have led a wild, bad life, and haven't been near a church till, by accident and from curiosity, I went into your church last Sunday. I heard you recite that great poem, and it has changed my life: I shall never disgrace my cloth again." "So," continued the clergyman, "though I may have lost my congregation, I have saved a soul by your poem."

Before leaving this Crimean period, I must tell you of a pretty little song in which our brave allies, the French, are heartily toasted, called "The Battle of Alma River." Tennyson wrote the first verse, and Mrs. Tennyson both finished the song and set it to music:—

Frenchman, a hand in thine
Our flags have waved together
Let us drink to the health of thee and thine
At the battle of Alma River.

Our flags together furled
Henceforward no other strife
Than which of us most shall help the world,
Which lead the noblest life.

The terrible Indian Mutiny, which followed so close upon the fall of Sebastopol that the same regiments that had fought there were immediately ordered off to Cal-

cutta, in 1857, stirred Tennyson's soul to the depths, and its deeds of heroism elicited from his pen that powerful piece, "The Defence of Lucknow." The keynotes of this thrilling description of the awful three months siege in the undermined Residency, and its relief by Outram and Havelock, consist of the last words addressed to his soldiers by the dying General, Sir Henry Lawrence, "*Let every man die at his post*;" and in the proud refrain "*And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England flew.*" Thirty years afterwards, Lord Napier of Magdala, who had been in Outram and Havelock's relieving force, visited the poet at Aldworth, and assured him that the poem was so accurate in every detail that he should have believed that the author had been present at the siege. Tennyson made a profound remark at this visit of Lord Napier. "It was a terrible time for England, but from this mutiny our race grew in strength." Aye, true indeed! Many a time since that dark year, in many a far-off spot have Britons acted out these lines of the poet:—

Handful of men as we were, we were English, in heart and limb
Strong with the strength of the race, to command, to obey, to endure,
Each of us fought as if hope for the garrison hung but on him.

In his ballads of "The Fleet," and "The Revenge," Tennyson has done good service both to the Navy and to our sailors. In 1885, aroused by Mr. W. T. Stead's articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, entitled, "The truth

about the Navy," the Laureate addressed a stirring remonstrance to the lords of the Admiralty, charging them with neglect of Britain's chief defence. I give you one verse:—

THE FLEET.

On you will come the curse of all the land,
Should this old England fall
Which Nelson left so great,
Her dauntless army scattered, and so small
Her Island-myriads fed from alien lands,
The fleet of England is her all in all
Her fleet is in your hands
And in her fleet her fate.

Cardinal Manning said that "this song ought to be set to music, and sung perpetually as a national song in every town of the Empire." This piece certainly enhanced the effect of the *Pall Mall* articles, for the revival of our Navy dates from the following year, 1886.

"The Revenge" is a free paraphrase, in flowing metre, of a most striking event in Elizabethan history, narrated by Bacon, Raleigh, and Froude. Sir Richard Grenville, in command of a small ship manned by only a hundred able men, there being ninety sick and disabled down below, was caught by the Spanish fleet of fifty-three large galleons and caravels at Flores in the Azores. The fight raged for fifteen hours, when the captain, mortally wounded, and having only a few men left alive, "ordered the master gunner to split and sink the ship, that no glory of victory might remain to the Spaniards." But the gunner was restrained from this desperate act by the survivors of the crew, who then were captured by the

Spanish. As Sir Richard is dying he cries out, almost in the exact words of the ancient chronicle:—

I have fought for Queen and Faith, like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty, as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I, Sir Richard Grenville, die,
And he fell upon their decks, and he died

Tennyson had always a profound admiration for the masters of the sea in that age when England's naval power began: and he has done well to resuscitate this act of almost unique daring, which Froude states, "struck a deeper terror into the hearts of the Spanish, and dealt a more deadly blow upon their fame. . . . than [the defeat of] the Armada itself." You will enjoy this ballad still more when you hear Dr. Stanford's very dramatic choral musical setting.

Tennyson's volunteer song "Riflemen, Form," printed in the *Times* in May, 1859, at a time when more than one continental power seemed prepared to take the offensive against England, rang like a trumpet-call through the land and gave that impetus to the Rifle Volunteer movement, which it has never since lost. By a mere coincidence, a War Office order permitting the formation of Rifle Corps was issued three days after the appearance of the poem. Set to spirited music by Balfe, it became a popular favourite everywhere.

Tennyson's patriotism was of the discerning kind that was not blind to our national faults. He observed, "We recklessly offend foreign powers, being the most beastly

self-satisfied nation in the world." "The fault of the Englishman is that he thinks that he and his ways are always right everywhere." Well-timed indeed is this caution Tennyson gives,—"We ought not to show our arsenals and dockyards to the world, as we do. *Want of confidence is hateful among members of a family; but want of confidence is necessary among nations.*"

In a letter to the Queen, in 1889, *apropos* of a visit from her grandson, the Emperor of Germany, the Laureate makes the shrewd remark, "England and Germany are nations too closely allied by the subtle sympathy of kindred not to be either true brothers or deadly foes. As brothers, what might they not do for the world?"

Tennyson did not, after Crimean days, regard Russia as a bogie, as our Indian military authorities do. Eloquently he denounced its tyranny to Poland in a Milton-like sonnet of his early days. Yet, by the irony of events, the same poet who, in 1832, wrote of the Czar as "the iron-hearted Muscovite," and of Russia as "that overgrown barbarian in the east," forty years afterwards officially, as Laureate, presented a graceful ode of welcome to the grand-daughter of that very Czar who fought us in the Crimea, and died of chagrin at his defeat. How dexterously does the poet soften the situation in his ode to the Princess Mary Alexandrovna, who came over in 1875 to be our Royal Alfred's bride:

> **The son of him with whom we strove for power,**
> **Whose will is lord through all his world's domain**
> **Who made the serf a man, and burst his chain,**
> **Has given our Prince his own Imperial Flower,**
> **Alexandrovna.**

Nine more years passed, and Tennyson met the Czar, Alexander III., "the Liberator," at Copenhagen, where he read some of his poems to the largest Royal audience that ever poet faced.

The year before his death, the Laureate wrote to the Secretary of the Russo-Jewish Committee, who invoked his aid in checking the persecution of the Jews, "I have read what is reported of the Russian persecutions . . . if that be true I can only say that Russia has disgraced her church and her nationality. I once met the Czar. He seemed a kind and good-natured man. I can scarcely believe that he is fully aware of the barbarities perpetrated with his sanction."

Tennyson visited France several times, and though the French and he had not much in common, he admired the rapid recuperation of the country after the disaster of the Franco-German war, and was glad whenever England and France were in agreement. A sagacious forecast of the present (the Third) Republic of France is worth quoting, because the prophecy has been fulfilled, "I cannot feel so sure," said he, in 1875, "that the Republic denounced by M. Rouher will not surprise many [people] by its duration. *They can have perpetual change of their men in power now.*" Time has amply

justified this prediction, for the Third Republic has lived a dozen years longer than the First or Great Republic, while the Cabinets formed and dissolved have been as numerous and short-lived as the Presidents of a South American State.

Tennyson's patriotism extended to the choice of subjects for his plays. Though strongly tempted to write a drama upon William Prince of Orange, after reading Motley's fascinating "Dutch Republic," he reflected that our own history was so great, and that he knew and liked English subjects so well, that he determined to set about writing "Queen Mary." In his four English dramas, he has admirably portrayed the making of England's liberties. In "Harold" we have the great conflict between Danes, Saxons, and Normans for supremacy; the awakening of the clergy from their slumber, and the forecast of the greatness of our composite race. In that pretty pastoral play, "The Foresters," the state of the common people is sketched in a transition period, when the Barons sided with the Plebs and forced Magna Charta from the King. In "Beckett" the contest is between the Crown and the Church for predominance. And, in "Queen Mary," we have presented the final downfall of Romanism in England, and the dawning of a new age of spiritual freedom for the individual Englishman.

When we seek to know what were Tennyson's own political principles we find him believing in *measures*—

not in *partisans*, nor in party-views. All his life he refused to label himself as either a Liberal or a Conservative. What a wise answer he gave his friend Fitzgerald when asked if he was a Conservative—"I believe in progress and I conserve the hopes of man." Tennyson could never understand the righteousness of government by party. He wished for the early days of the Roman Republic,

> When none was for a party,
> But all were for the State;
> When the great man helped the poor man,
> And the poor man loved the great.

But he was nothing of a Socialist. He believed in *raising the individual* and educating him to use the franchise wisely, and he had none of the present-day crazes for Communism, Land Increment Tax, the Nationalisation of Railways, Industries, Docks, and so forth. Up to the last Reform Bill (1867) he joined in all the social and political movements initiated by the Liberal party. Yet he was invited, in 1880, to stand for election as Lord Rector of Glasgow University by the Conservative party of the students, and declined, on the ground that he was not a party candidate. Nothing can be wiser than the earnest advice he quotes from Bacon, and gives to Statesmen "who know when to take occasion by the hand," on the subject of Reform:—"Follow the example of Time itself, which indeed innovateth greatly, but quietly, and by degrees scarce to be per-

ceived." Much rancour of party-spirit, and much waste of time and energy would be saved to our legislators if they would follow the advice of these three verses:

> Watch what main currents draw the years;
> Cut Prejudice against the grain—
> But gentle words are always gain;
> Regard the weakness of thy peers:
>
> Nor toil for title, place, or touch
> Of pension, neither count on praise—
> It grows to guerdon after days,
> Nor deal in watch-words over-much.
>
> Not clinging to some ancient saw,
> Nor mastered by some modern term,
> Not swift nor slow to change, but firm;
> And in its season bring the law.

If Tennyson had chosen the field of politics like his ancestor the elder Pitt, Earl of Chatham, he would have made a grand Premier.

By his powerful intellect, high principle, disinterestedness, and strong personal magnetism, he would have rallied round him the best men of all parties, and led them whither he would. I think that he would have combined the clever opportunism of D'Israeli with the sympathetic Liberalism of Gladstone, and the humour, frankness, and strong common-sense of Lord Palmerston, blending all these qualities with his own intense and far-sighted patriotism.

But his shyness and nervous sensitiveness shut him out from all public spheres of usefulness. He was a born

poet, and his single earthly ambition was first to deserve, and then to receive the Poet's Crown.

And now let us ask how Tennyson regarded the masses. He was so democratic on one point that it took all the eloquence of his dear friend Gladstone, all the persuasion of his son, and the unrecorded influence of his Sovereign (from whom he had thrice refused a baronetcy), to get him to accept a peerage; and even then he said he should regret all his life his abandoning the plain "Mr."

In his youth, as I have described, he feared the coming democracy, calling himself "a voice before the storm." In middle age, once, when the Queen, in 1863, asked her Laureate what she could do for him, he replied "nothing, Madam, but to shake my two boys by the hand. It may keep them loyal in the troublous times to come." But in his old age he has a firmer trust in the people. In 1887, just after he had published the second "Locksley Hall" (a mixture of optimism and pessimism), Tennyson utters these interesting thoughts:—"I do not the least mind if England eventually becomes a democracy. But violent, selfish, unreasoning democracy would bring bureaucracy, and the iron rule of a Cromwell. Let the demagogues remember that liberty forgetful of others is license, and nothing better than treason. . . As Goethe says, 'the worst thing in the world is ignorance in motion.' This world would grow into the wickedest of worlds, should all this

babble and gabble ever succeed in impressing on the people that the obligation of contract is mere tyranny, and that law is nothing but coercion. At present we are . . . freer than America. I have trust in the reason of the English people who have an inborn respect for law. . . . I believe in

Our crowned republic's crowning common-sense."

Believing that much of the poverty and discontent of the proletariat could be removed by the settlement of the labourer on the land, Tennyson took up shares in a company formed, in 1885, for the purpose by Auberon Herbert and Albert Grey, now Earl Grey. A year or two later a company of labourers was taken out by Arnold White to South Africa, and called "the Tennyson Colony." I might here mention that the Laureate's name is commemorated in physical geography in two other widely separated portions of Her Majesty's dominions—Cape Tennyson in the Arctic regions, in Lat. 79°, and Lake Tennyson in the middle island of New Zealand, so named by my friend Sir Frederick Weld. Everyone knows that the Laureate was the founder of the Boys' Homes, established as a National Memorial to General Gordon, whose saintly, heroic, pure, simple character is so well summed up in the first line of Tennyson's epitaph—

Warrior of God, man's friend, and tyrant's foe.

I may add, before passing on, that in his far-off isolation in Khartoum, Gordon enjoyed his Tennyson.

In a letter to his friend Lady Cardwell, who had sent him the collected poems in small volumes in a case, he writes (March, 1878): "I find the reading of Tennyson is my great relief, and the volumes are so small and of such clear print that they will always go with me. I have long wanted a small copy, but never knew that he had published one."

When the Home Rule agitation came on in Parliament Tennyson preferred patriotism to friendship and assured his many friends of the Liberal Party that he was "heart and soul an Unionist." In this he justified Carlyle's bold assertion that "Alfred from the beginning always took a grip of the right side of a question." In pronouncing an opinion upon any new proposal, Tennyson looked to its ultimate consequences as well as to its immediate effects, and he saw that the granting of colonial self-government to Ireland would destroy the unity of the United Kingdom. With philosophical acumen he also points out the racial divergencies. "The Keltic race does not easily amalgamate with other races, as those of Scandinavian origin do—as for instance Saxon and Norman, which have fused perfectly. The Teuton has no poetry in his nature like the Kelt, and this makes the Kelt much more dangerous in politics, for he yields more to his imagination than to his common-sense. . . . . Suppose that we allowed Ireland to separate from us: owing to its factions she would soon fall a prey to some

foreign power. She has absolute freedom now, and a more than full share in the government of one of the mightiest empires in the world." But nothing in politics even could separate in heart the two grand old men, Gladstone and Tennyson.

In the year 1883 (before the shadow of Home Rule had come between them), Gladstone assured Hallam Tennyson that his father's political poems were among the wisest of political utterances. I am sure that in his heart of hearts, Mr. Gladstone could not but admire that line of his friend's which was blazoned on the banners of all the great Unionist meetings throughout Great Britain, in 1892:—

One life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne.

When the complete life of our aged Liberal Statesman comes to be written, not the least interesting of its pages will be the correspondence and conversations of these two attached and congenial friends.*

Passing on now to another subject, the Colonies and the Empire, I may state that Tennyson was the first British poet to form that grand conception of our national destiny that is now known as Imperialism. The two joyous Jubilee years, 1887 and 1897, have done more to knit the hearts of her people to their Queen-Empress,

* On May 19th, 1898, this great Christian statesman entered into his rest, in his 89th year, and was buried in Westminster Abbey amid the mourning of the civilized world.

and to consolidate the various interests of our vast Empire, than any events in the whole history of Great Britain. It is Tennyson who, in one striking verse, describes our Empire-building, and bids us to be courageous:

> We sailed wherever ship could sail,
> We founded many a mighty state,
> Pray God our greatness may not fail
> Through craven fears of being great.

My enthusiasm for Tennyson has been much increased by the evidences in his *Life* of his love and appreciation of our colonies. *As far back as* 1871, long before our Cabinet Ministers dreamed of such things, Tennyson advocated inter-colonial conferences in London, and that the foremost colonial ministers should be admitted to the Privy Council or to some other Imperial council where they could have a voice in Imperial affairs. For many years he carried on a cordial exchange of ideas with Sir Henry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales, on the subject of Australian federation, of which the latter was the founder, and which is now accomplished.*

One of the most remarkable episodes in colonial history took place twenty-five years ago, when Tennyson's poetry saved Canada to the Empire! From 1865 to 1872 there was much discontent in Canada with the Home Government, and a Canadian Independence Party was formed, with Mr. A. T. Galt at its head. He was

* See the Author's "Birth of New Nations during the Reign of Victoria: Dominion of Canada and Commonwealth of Australia."

assured by friends in England that the Liberal Cabinet of that day was quite prepared to "let Canada go, if she wished. In October, 1872, the *Times* had a leader, evidently "inspired" by Ministers, in which the costliness of maintaining Canada was harped upon, and even separation was hinted at. When this reached Canada, great was the indignation of the loyal Canadians—the majority, fortunately for us. Great also was Tennyson's wrath and shame at the remark of an eminent statesman, who said to him, "Would to God Canada would go!" The poet was just then writing an epilogue to the completed *Idylls of the King*, addressed "To the Queen," and referring in touching terms to the recovery of the Prince of Wales from his almost fatal illness. He at once added an eloquent remonstrance in the lines that follow:—

> And that true North, whereof we lately heard
> A strain to shame us—"Keep you to yourselves;
> So loyal is too costly! friends, your love
> Is but a burthen; loose the bond, and go—"
> Is this the tone of Empire? here the faith
> That made us rulers? this, indeed, her voice . . .
> The voice of Britain, or a sinking land—
> Some third-rate isle half lost among her seas?
> . . . . The loyal to their crown
> Are loyal to their own far sons, who love
> Our Ocean-Empire with her boundless homes.

The effect on the Canadians of these stirring lines was splendid; the poem rallied them round the Union Jack, sorely tempted as they were to fall away to the Stars and Stripes—for that is what the Independence Party were

working for, secretly. Lord Dufferin, then Governor-General, wrote to Tennyson: "Your noble words have struck responsive fire from every heart; they have . . . effectually healed the wounds caused by the senseless language of the *Times*. Canada may well be proud that her loyal aspirations should be imperishably recorded in the greatest poem of this generation."

The whole episode is an illustration of an apt *obiter dictum* of the poet, "It is the authors, not the diplomats, who make nations love one another."

Contrast the angry and justly-indignant Canada of 1872 with the vast Canadian Dominion of 1897, who sends her silver-tongued Premier—an orator who recalled to me Gladstone in his best days—to assure the Old Country of her enthusiastic loyalty, and to make the generous and spontaneous offer of what is almost free admission of British exports to his country,—a noble example to other colonies.

If I were to summarise Tennyson's national and political principles in the form of a creed, it would be after this fashion:—

"I believe in the British Constitution, with such modifications as the age requires, equally assented to by the Three Estates of the Realm. I believe in Peace with Honour, but in a constant preparedness for war; in the maintenance of our Public Services, especially the Navy. Our boys should be drilled and our adults trained in the use of farms, but not by compulsion. I believe in Uni-

versal Free Education in which God and His Word are recognised; and in the Union of the Church with the State. I believe in conserving the unity of the three kingdoms; in the continual expansion of the Empire; in Colonial Federation, Imperial Federation, and in the Confederation of the Anglo-Saxon races."

This "Study of Tennyson" would be incomplete without at least some allusion to the personal friendship of the Queen for the Laureate. Her Majesty's deep appreciation of his earlier poems, in which the Prince Consort also joined, was enhanced by the delicate and heartfelt sympathy shewn her by her Laureate at their first personal interview (1862) after the death of the Prince. The poet was profoundly moved to learn from the Queen's own lips that in her great sorrow "In Memoriam" had been her comfort, next to the Bible. The few letters that we are privileged to read in the Biography are most interesting, as showing the growth of respect and affection on both sides, without a scintilla of patronising or of adulation. Especially noteworthy is the letter written by Tennyson to the Queen, accepting the peerage, as a model of felicitous expression. In current political views, the Queen and her Laureate seem to have harmonised, especially upon the thorny subject of Home Rule for Ireland. "The Queen," said Tennyson, in conversation with a friend, "has a wonderful knowledge of politics—quite wonderful—and her sagacity about them seems unerring. *The Queen never mistakes her people.*" The

annual return of Tennyson's birthday, August 6th—which happened to coincide with the natal days of the Duke of Edinburgh and the Marquis of Lorne—always brought a kindly message from Her Majesty, sometimes with the Royal author's latest book. And in the great bereavement of his old age—the death of his younger son Lionel—the Queen's touching words, "From the depths of a heart which has suffered cruelly and lost almost all it cared for and loved best, I *feel for you*," must have soothed the poet's grief, so far as human sympathy could go.

In conclusion, our great Laureate's religious faith was typical of a National Representative Poet of this questioning, sceptical, analytic age. His "In Memoriam" shows his long spiritual conflict ended in victory. The testimony of his intimates (particularly that of his niece, Miss Agnes Weld), as well as of his biography, show that Tennyson was *personally* devout, a student of the Bible, a believer in prayer, and an attendant of public worship. "I hope," he said, "that the Bible will be more and more studied by all ranks of the people, and *expounded by their teachers, simply*; for the religion of a people can never be founded on mere philosophy, but can only come home to them in the simple, noble thoughts and facts of a Scripture like ours. . . . Evil must come upon us headlong, if morality tries to get on without religion. . . . One can easily lose all belief through giving up the continual thought and care for spiritual things."

From that early sonnet, "To Poesy," printed on p. 60 of vol. i. of the *Life*, beginning—

> O God, make this age great, that we may be
> As giants in Thy Praise,

down to his exquisite "Swan Song," "Crossing the Bar," the poetry of Tennyson is permeated with the principles and teaching of that Sacred Book, which our Christian Sovereign, on a memorable occasion, solemnly declared has been "the secret of England's greatness."

Three great national poets—Wordsworth, Browning, and Tennyson—have moulded for good the moral and spiritual thought of the last and of the present generation. Each of these great prophets, we are glad to know, was religious in spirit, pure in life, and happy in his domestic circle. In Alfred Tennyson, endowed with the aptest poetical form of the three, it seems to me that the love of solitary communion with nature which was Wordsworth's characteristic blended with Browning's gift of studying man in all his types and emotions; and in his greatest poems both are transfused into original and profound expression by the alchemy of his individual genius. Wordsworth's best poems have a soothing yet elevating effect on the mind; Browning's knowledge of humanity, and his robust faith in the goodness of God, help us to fight the battle of life; while Tennyson's whole life-work has had for its object the elevation of the ideals of his fellow-countrymen. As regards our national policy his

ardent loyalty, sincere patriotism, and far-seeing British Imperialism made our late Laureate the deadly foe of all that is foolish, mean, dishonest, or degrading in the conduct of our vast Empire, the expansion of which makes for the material, moral, and spiritual welfare of the entire human race.

On the roll of Immortals place Tennyson's name
Chief bard of this fertile Victorian age;
Rich in work, pure in life, he has merited fame
As our National Patriot-Poet and Sage.

III. TENNYSON AS A POET OF HUMANITY.

(First delivered, December 12th, 1898.)

More than two thousand years ago a Latin dramatist put into the mouth of one of his leading characters this memorable line: *Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto*—

> **I am a Man, and nought can ever be**
> **Of human life outside my sympathy.**

Terence, the African slave-poet, whose genius gained him not only personal freedom but also classic renown, has given in these noble words the motto for succeeding Poets of Humanity. Every man or woman who appreciates poetry (and there are many who do not, just as there are many unmusical people) has his or her favourite authors. And I think the preference is given by most readers to the Poet who exhibits the greatest sympathy with Humanity. Now this quality, which assures popularity, must be based upon a knowledge of actual life, a natural gift of insight into character, a graphic power of description, and an eager desire to help man onward and upward in his career, by "thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

I should call this talent of poets "The Sympathetic Instinct of Humanity,"—a term which is broader than

either philanthropy or humanitarianism, in that it is inclusive of both the *Welt-Schmerz* and the *Zeit-Geist* of German authors. Of course, Shakspere, our supreme national poet, is full of this Instinct of Humanity. Both Realism and Idealism meet on the stage and mingle harmoniously in the Plays of the author of that immortal sentiment—

> One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin.

It is this humanitarian element in the poems of Crabbe, Scott, Wordsworth, Burns, Longfellow, the Brownings, Mrs. Hemans, Adelaide Proctor, Tom Hood, and in our own day Rudyard Kipling and George R. Sims, with others, that gives them a special charm. Though it lies within the gift of every true poet, yet it is a quality unequally distributed. For instance, I find it much less prominent than one would expect in the works of Byron, Goethe, and of Pope—three poets who powerfully affected Tennyson at various epochs of his life. To account for this lack of the "Sympathetic Instinct of Humanity" we must understand something of the character and personal life of these poets.

In the case of Byron, whose paternal heredity of evil might have been suppressed by a mother's love, a wise education, and a cheerful home, his whole nature was warped by his violent-tempered mother's ill-treatment. With a face as beautiful as Adonis, his club-foot was

never out of his thoughts, and as soon as he emerged from tutelage

> The passionate heart of the poet was whirled into folly and vice.

A bitter spirit of cynicism seized him and was never exorcised. A mocking tone ran through most of his poems, and even through his ordinary conversation. In early life Tennyson almost worshipped Byron, and was profoundly moved by his death. At the age of sixty he confessed that at fourteen he was *blasé* of life, thanks to Byron. Well indeed was it for the world that this phase of Byronic despair soon passed away.

Again, in Goethe's life-work, great thinker and great artist as he was, there is but a small amount of real sympathy for poor human nature. I say this in spite of his "*Herman and Dorothea*," which is a most pathetic idyll of War-time. Goethe was a philosopher and man of science, whose many-sided genius expressed itself sometimes in poetry, and sometimes in prose. But when one comes to read his life, one finds that in character he was a selfish egotist. His personal beauty, brilliance of converse, and a certain magnetism which attracted everyone, made him the idol of the German women. But we do not find Goethe's own heart deeply touched by any of his numerous *inamorati* except perhaps by Frederica, his fiancée, whom he cruelly jilted, and who died of a broken heart. The loves of Gretchen, Annette, Lili, Bettina, von Lewezow, and others, passed

over his heart like zephyrs which gently ripple the surface of a deep blue lake, leaving its depths undisturbed. In fact even Goethe's Autobiography shows us that he cultivated these love affairs to provide heroines for his writings. In order to make psychological studies of these loving, trusting hearts, he acted more passion than he felt! His bitter criticism of Balzac that "each of his best novels seemed dug out of a suffering woman's heart" might have justly retorted upon its author. Only in one of his works—the drama of *Goetz von Berlichingen*—does Goethe give us a really noble, self-forgetful man, standing in the foreground as a moral standard by which to measure the lesser characters. Goethe's impassiveness is shown by his standing among the bullet and cannon-shot of the Battle of Valney without the least agitation of the blood, and by the calmly indifferent manner in which he received the news of the 1830 Revolution. Tennyson held the German poet in high respect as a profound *thinker*; his vague references to the Divine Creator as the "Nameless One," and other phrases, have been probably suggested by Goethe's works; and we now know that he is the poet referred to in the first of "In Memoriam," as

> **Him who sings**
> **To one clear harp in divers tones,**
> **That men may rise on stepping-stones**
> **Of their dead selves to higher things.**

But, fortunately, though Tennyson's mind was distinctly philosophic, his temperament was more impres-

sionable, though less accessible to flattery, and much more sympathetic than Goethe's.

Alexander Pope might, by his famous "Essay on Man," claim a high place among Poets of Humanity, if he had only given us some gracious types of human beings, as did Goldsmith in his "Deserted Village," and not merely analyzed or dissected the heart of man with the cold precision of a grammarian, or of a naturalist. Reading over his Essay for the third time, I noticed that the original version of his line

The proper study of Mankind is Man.

was—"The only science of Mankind is Man"—conveying a different idea from the published phrase; and it is this frigidly philosophic spirit which pervades the poem. Pope's sickly and somewhat deformed body carried an intellect far larger and more ambitious in proportion. His temper was soured by long-delayed recognition of his genius, and by many personal affronts; and his best poetic powers are devoted to satire. Though we derive many apt and forcible quotations from his lines, always sonorous, and generally weighty, we do not get from Pope that genial sympathy with the joys and sorrows of life which we have in Tennyson.

Now this evening, I desire to bring Lord Tennyson before you in a broader character than even those of a Nature-Poet and of a National Poet in which I have presented him in my first two "Studies,"—I mean as a great

poet largely gifted with the Sympathetic Instinct of Humanity. I hope to show you that the keenness of observation and thirst for knowledge which exercised themselves on the whole realm of Nature, from the microscopic inhabitants of a pond to the millions of suns that gem the midnight sky,—that these powers find their culmination in the poet's studies of *human life, character*, and *action*. Tennyson comes nearer to our hearts in these poems than in his Arthurian Idylls or in his classical imitations. By them also he fulfils Matthew Arnold's fine definition of Poetry—"*Poetry is at bottom a criticism of life, and the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life and to the question, 'How to Live!'*"

Imprimis, I must ask you to believe that the great poet was *not* a recluse, or a moody egotist, aloof from all but his own circle of admirers, and wholly unaffected by the tidal waves of human thought or of popular emotion. On the contrary, though painfully shy and nervous, he was most genial and sociable wherever he felt he knew the company. He was full of humour; could jest and pun with the drollest; and was a capital mimic, especially of Lincolnshire folk. He had a tender heart, as well as the highest poetic imagination. Sin and sorrow, ill-requited toil, and preventable suffering were to him as distressful as they were hideous. In the short poems entitled "Rizpah," "Despair," "The Sisters," "The First

Quarrel," "The Wreck," "Romney's Remorse," "The Leper's Bride," and others—all founded upon true incidents—Tennyson has uttered cries from the depths of human hearts as solemn and tragic as the agony of Tom Hood's "Bridge of Sighs," and Mrs. Browning's "Cry of the Children." We ought not to conclude, as some critics have done, that because his life was not marked by great vicissitude, the poet's sympathies were limited, and the range and spirit of his poetry narrowed.

With philosophic freedom from mental bias and with absolute disregard of caste, Tennyson looked around him for types of character, and limited himself to English life. He draws them out and sets them in action, however, in such fashion as to teach the highest ethical truths to all mankind. If he favours any class at all above another, it is the class of manual workers both in town and country. The only dislikes of social grades expressed in his poems are for the *nouveaux riches* among the aristocracy and squirearchy, and for servile or dishonest tradesmen. After studying his shorter poems, you will find that Tennyson has left us a gallery of portraits in verse faithfully representative of how we lived and loved, toiled and played, suffered and rejoiced, grew old and died, in the great Victorian Era.

Let us begin with the lowest social grade represented in his poems—the Lincolnshire farmers and labourers. At Somersby, where young Alfred Tennyson lived for the first twenty years of his life, he gathered many quaint

sayings, proverbs, and humorous and pathetic incidents of life among these honest simple-hearted country people. Some of this experience of lowly lives he has preserved for us in his seven masterly Dialect Poems. How wonderfully he has transliterated the ideas, language, and exact accent of the Lincolnshire farmers, their wives, and others, can only be fully appreciated by those who have lived there, or by philologists who study provincial dialects as a science,—to whom, I may add, Tennyson has rendered good service by giving them a place among his poems. How thoroughly Tennyson appreciated the good qualities of the peasantry is shown by his eulogy in a poem of his old age—"Locksley Hall Sixty Years After"—where he contrasts them with the glib-tongued electioneering orator:

> Plowmen, shepherds, have I found, and more than once,
> and still could find,
> Sons of God, and Kings of men, in utter nobleness of mind;
> Truthful, trustful, looking upwards to the practised hustings-liar;
> So the Higher wields the Lower, while the Lower is the Higher.

All through his long life, the poet kept up his habit of visiting the country people at their homes, talking to them in the simplest possible language, and drawing out their ideas, especially of the aged men, upon death and a future life. So good a memory as Tennyson's must have held many a mental portrait, each one different from another—as, for instance, that of the Old Style of

Northern Farmer from the New Style Farmer, and that of the Village Wife from the Spinster—for, as he says,

> No compound of this earthly ball
> Is like another, all in all.

The people reciprocated his liking for them, and great was the astonishment of many an old cottager when informed that their genial, easy-talking, joking visitor was "The Queen's Own Poet" and famous throughout the world.

A poor old shepherd on Tennyson's estate, who lived till 92, used to say, during his last days—"Ah! I should like to see the Master again; he is a wonderful man for Nature and life."

I doubt not that the "May Queen," the most popular and simple of his pathetic poems, was composed while he was visiting a cottage home in Lincolnshire where a poor girl was slowly wasting from the fell disease of Northern climes.

Now let us take as our first "Character-Type" the "Northern Farmer, Old Style." This piece, written accurately in the country dialect, was founded upon the last words of a dying farm-bailiff, as reported to Tennyson. This audacious utterance was "God Almighty little knows what he's about, a-taäking me. . . An Squoire 'ull be so mad an' all."

We are supposed by the poet to listen to the old Northern Farmer's story of his life as he lies on his

death-bed. His views of things exactly reflect the crass ignorance which prevailed through the country districts during the first quarter of this century. His conscience pricks him for a certain sin, for which he thinks he has atoned; but he has no real religion, apparently; no knowledge of where he is going; nor in Whom to put his trust for salvation. He raves against the doctor for cutting down his ale; against the parson for trying to bring him to repent; and against the Almighty for calling him away. He had gone to church regularly, while his wife was alive, but the service had no meaning for him. He says that the Parson's voice was as the booming of the cock-chafer over his head. Yet he always left the Church-door feeling that the rector had done his duty:

> **An' I niver knawed whot a meäned, but I thowt a'ad summut to saäy,**
> **An' I thowt a said whot a owt to'a said, and I coom'd awaäy.**

In viewing his past life, the old man assures his nurse that he had "always done his duty by the land, by the parson, by the Squire, and by all." And he bases some credit to himself as a set-off against his one confessed sin—Bessy Morris's bairn—on the "stubbing" or reclamation of Thurnaby Waste, once all fern and gorse, and (worse still) haunted by the ghost of a murdered gamekeeper, who took the shape of a bittern! And now it carries food enough for 80 ewes, and part of it is sown

in clover. This is the great good deed of his life, and the poor old heathenish dullard cannot understand why

> God A mighty must take him now,
> Wi' aäf the cows to cauve, and Thurnaby hoälms to plow!

This poem conveys a masterly though painful reflection of the times at the beginning of this century, when these poor untaught, though often well-to-do farmers went out of life without any more definite religious faith than the African negro! Yet there is one soft spot in the hard heart of this old farmer—his affection for the soil from which he sprang and upon which he has spent so much effective labour. The bitter thought that the new-fangled invention of the Devil, the Steam-plough, might be used by his successors to cut up his beloved land almost reconciles him to face the "King of Terrors."

> But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi'is kittle o' steäm
> Huzzin an' maäzin the blessed feälds wi' the Devil's oän teäm.
> Sin' I mun doy, I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
> But sin' I mun doy, I *mun* doy, for I could'n abeär to see it.

The "Northern Farmer of the New Style" exhibits the progress of education, intelligence, wealth, and ambition among that class, and does credit to the observing powers of the poet.

Upon a simple phrase used by a rich farmer near Somersby—"When I canters my 'erse along the ramper (highway) I 'ears, 'proputty, proputty, proputty,'" Tenny-

son has built one of the wittiest poems in our language. This farmer has two sons, Sam and Dick, both probably better educated and more ambitious than their father. Hearing that Samuel, the elder, has fallen in love with the Curate's pretty but penniless daughter, his father scolds him as a fool; lays down to him the law of Mammon as *his* Decalogue; and winds up by threatening to disinherit him if he marries a dowerless bride.

No romantic rubbish about Farmer No. 2! He has not even the touch of sentiment of Farmer No. 1 about the land.

> Luvv, what's luvv? Thou can luvv thy lass and her munny too,
> Maaking them goä together, as they've good right to do,
> Could'n I luvv thy mother by cause o' her munny laaid by?
> Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it: reason why.

As for beauty, graceful charm, prettiness, he despises such things.

> What's a beauty?—the flower as blaws!
> But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

His vision of heaven is even colour-blinded by his love of money, for he boldly asserts it to be a help, instead of a hindrance, to our getting in there.

> Proputty, proputty's iverything 'ere, and, Sammy, I'm blest
> If it isn't the same oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.
> 'Tis'n them as 'as munny as breaks into 'ouses and steals,
> Them as 'as coäts to their backs, and taäkes their regular meäls.
> Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meal's to be 'ad;
> Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor, in a loomp, is bad.

The Northern Cobbler is a very telling Temperance story, founded on an actual occurrence. A shoemaker who had become a confirmed drunkard, yet retained some domestic affection in his sober hours, one morning woke up to find his wife injured and the cottage furniture all smashed by his violence of the previous night.

He came to himself,

like the Prodigal Son, and swore off the drink for ever. But he resolves upon a singular way of showing his friends that he was really reformed. He fetches a quart bottle of gin from the village public-house which had been the scene of his carousals, and sets it up in the window of his workroom, "so that," as the original of the poem said, "I may always look my enemy in the face, and defy the drink."

I have no space for quotation, but I must mention one little anecdote, which shows what good use could be made of the poem by abstainers, among those who understand the dialect.

A lady was reading the Northern Cobbler at a village entertainment, at which the notorious drunkard of the place was present. When she had read this line,

An' I looked cock-eyed at my noäse, an' I seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire,

the victim of drink regarded it as a personal affront, and abruptly left the room, muttering "Women knoaws too much now-a-daäy."

In the "Village Wife" and "The Spinster's Sweet-Arts" Tennyson gives us monologues of the Lincolnshire women, and in "Old Rover" records the heroic deed of a black retriever dog who saved an infant from a burning house, and was blinded by the flames. "The Village Wife" is the only *personal* sketch of the whole seven dialect poems. It is a perfect self-drawn portrait of the mind of a coarse, illiterate, scandal-mongering farmer's wife, who is envious of those above her in station, and has a special dislike to book-learning, which had been the ruin of the late Squire, her best customer for eggs and butter. Her tongue runs on in the most life-like, gossipy way about the Squire's terribly crushing misfortunes—all due to his crazy extravagance in buying useless old books. She emphasises the general feeling of the village,

> We haätes book-larnin' 'ere,

by telling with satisfaction how the domestics at the Hall used to tear out the middle leaves of the Squire's rare and costly old books to light the fires with!

The lines describing from her point of view the extraordinary and expensive intelligence of an antiquary are very humorous:—

> I 'ears as 'e'd gie fur a dirty owd book thutty pound and moor,
> An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn sen, so I knaw'd es 'e'd coom to be poor,
> An' 'e gied—I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow much,—fur an owd scratted stoän,

An' 'e digged up a loomp i' the land, an' e' got a brown pot, an' a boän,
An' 'e bowt owd munny, es wouldn't goä, wi' good gowd o' the Queen,
An' 'e bowt little statutes, all-naäkt, an' which was a shame to be seen;
But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e niver not seed to owt
An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booöks, an' booöks as tha knaws beänt nowt.

Even in his 81st year Tennyson retained such a vivid recollection of his county dialect and the humours of the farmer class that he composed, with much enjoyment to himself, the admirable "Churchwarden and the Curate." In this piece, quite different in motive and idea from the six others, a shrewd and successful old farmer, a Churchwarden, who had prospered and raised himself in social status by deserting the "Baptises" for the parish Church, gives advice, full of worldly wisdom, to the newly-appointed Curate, how to get on in the clerical profession. The present Rector, father of the Curate, has always been too outspoken to please the Squire and nobility and obtain preferment. But Mr. Harry should be more diplomatic.

But Parson 'e *will speäk out, saw*, now 'e be sixty-seven
He'll niver swap Owlby an' Scratby fur owt but the Kingdom of Heaven;
An' thou'll be his Curate here, but, if iver tha means to git higher,
Tha mun tackle the sins of the World, and not the faults o' the Squire.
An' I reckons tha'll light of a livin' somewheers i' the Wold or the Fen
If tha cottons down to thy betters, an' keeëps thysen to thysen.
But niver not speak plaäin out, if tha wants to git forrads a bit
But creeäp along the hedge-bottoms, *an' thou'll be a Bishop yit.*

Leaving the dialect poems, I will give you a few portraits in verse of other characteristic types of English life. Here is one of the Miller, an early friend of young Alfred Tennyson, which we find in the "Miller's Daughter," a poem of rural life:—

I see the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
Seemed half within and half without,
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver cup;
I see his grey eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear, and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Alas! this hospitable, cheery old type of country miller has disappeared before the encroachments of machinery worked by steam.

In the dialogue part of the poem called "The Brook" there is a clever picture of a self-satisfied, babbling talker, called Philip, along whose farm the busy brook meandered. This Philip was an actual neighbour of the Rev. Geo. Clayton Tennyson. In a few lines the perpetual chattering of this man is happily likened both to

the stream flowing on for ever, and to the chirp of the grasshoppers in the meadows.

> But Philip chattered more than brook or bird;
> Old Philip; all about the fields you caught
> His weary day-long chirping, like the dry
> High-elbowed grigs that leap in summer grass.

I used to know in New Zealand an old settler who might have been the original Philip,—so realistic is this sketch.

In his early and middle life Tennyson had not a very good opinion of the English squires, county magnates, and the nobility in general. He refers to their limited subjects of thought, in a letter to his Aunt, in 1847, "Why do all English country gentlemen talk of dogs, horses, roads, crops, &c.? It is better, after all, than affecting Art and Feeling, they would make a poor hand of that . . . . I wish they would be a little kinder to the poor. I would honour them, and they might talk what they would."

But the poet gives a very genial portrait of Sir Walter Vivian, the county baronet of the Introduction to the "Princess." It may be a portrait of Sir John Simeon.

> And there we saw Sir Walter, where he stood . . . .
> Among six boys, head under head, and looked . . . .
> A great, broad-shouldered genial Englishman,
> A lord of fat prize-oxen, and of sheep,
> A raiser of huge melons, and of pine,
> A patron of some thirty charities,
> A pamphleteer on guano, and on grain,

A quarter-sessions Chairman, abler none;
Fair-haired and redder than a windy morn.

If we go further up the social scale we find nothing complimentary to the aristocracy in Tennyson's poems, except of national heroes, who have won their ennoblement by glorious deeds of arms, or of statesmanship. His scorn of Lady Clara Vere de Vere; his contemptuous references to "the tenth transmitter of a foolish face"; the "baby-faced lord" who married Maud; the squire of Locksley Hall who "like a dog hunted in his dreams"; and the passage in Aylmer's Field I am about to quote, were not likely to ingratiate him with the Peers whose august House he entered by grace of his Sovereign and as a merited reward of genius, nine years before his death. But genius obliterated the memory of the unpalatable, and among Tennyson's most intimate friends were Lord Selborne and the Duke of Argyll.

In the poem of "Aylmer's Field," Leolin Averill, the lover of Sir Aylmer's daughter, rejected violently by the father because he is not of blue blood, nor of the Aylmer family, bursts out in these indignant words:

These old pheasant-lords,
These partridge-breeders of a thousand years,
Who had mildewed in their thousands, doing nothing,
Since Egbert,—why the greater their disgrace!
Fall back upon a name! Rest, rot in that!
Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler? Fools
With such a vantage-ground for nobleness!

No eighteenth century poet, and a very few poets of our own century would have printed such a scathing rebuke to our territorial aristocrats, who are now clinging to the last remnants of feudalism,—the Game Laws and Entail.

Tennyson during his later life was anxious to bring the working classes into friendly relations with the nobles, and commends to the latter at least one excellent practical suggestion. He says:—

> Why should not these great Sirs
> Give up their parks some dozen times a year
> To let the people breathe?

He himself set the example, in a small way, by entertaining parties of working lads at Aldworth. All his life, Tennyson felt interested in improving the physical, moral, and intellectual condition of the toilers. You remember how he tried to attract the Rev. F. D. Maurice to take a well-earned holiday in the Isle of Wight by offering to discuss with him—

> How best to help the slender store,
> How mend the dwellings of the poor,
> How gain in life, as life advances,
> Valour and charity more and more.

Tennyson has a way of painting his heroines by lines and touches, as it were, seldom giving his reader a complete personal description, but devoting his genius more

to the development of character through action and speech rather than through charms of form and colour. Thus artists have a free hand in drawing illustrations to his poems. We have no word portraits of Camilla, Dora, Œnone, the May Queen, and many others, but their speech and action always individualise them so skilfully that we feel we know them. Even of the fascinating Maud, we are only told that she had "golden hair," a "clear-cut, cold face"; "faultily faultless, icily regular" features,—the "underlip just a little too full," and "the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose."

But in the Brook, we have a pretty and complete sketch of a country-bred lass of sweet seventeen, Katie Willows (daughter of the aforesaid chatterer, Philip), which includes both form and character:—

> O darling Katie Willows, his one child!
> A maiden of our century, yet most meek,
> A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse,
> Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;
> Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair
> In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
> Divides threefold to show the fruit within.
> . . . . . Less of sentiment than sense
> Had Katie, not illiterate, nor of those
> Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,
> And nursed by mealy-mouthed philanthropies,
> Divorce the Feeling from her mate, the Deed.

The skill of the poet in depicting character and in conveying moral teaching is nowhere shown more strikingly than in his "English Idylls." Whereas the "Idylls of the

King" exhibit ideals to which the human soul may, by purification from sin, and by strife and struggle, attain, these "English Idylls," or "Idylls of the Hearth," as Tennyson originally named the Enoch Arden Volume,—show what ordinary men and women are in everyday life.

Let us select three representative scenes of English life:—"Dora," which illustrates, on a country farm, the havock wrought by a strong-willed, stern, and unforgiving father, and the lasting faithfulness of true love; "Sea-Dreams," teaching the lesson of forgiveness; and "Enoch Arden," a tale of moral heroism wherein the self-sacrifice is on the man's side, instead of on the woman's, where it usually occurs.

Of "Dora," the aged poet, Wordsworth, a man sparing of his praise and careful of his words, said, on meeting its author in 1846:—"Mr. Tennyson, I have been endeavouring all my life to write a pastoral like your 'Dora' and have not succeeded."

The diction of "Dora" is simplicity itself, there being only a dozen words of three syllables in a poem of 165 lines.

It begins abruptly, without any *mise-en-scène*, so as to fix the reader's attention on the three principal characters:

> With farmer Allan at the farm abode
> William and Dora. William was his son,
> And she his niece. He often looked at them,
> And often thought, "I'll make them man and wife."

Now in this little word "make" lies the sting of sadness which pervades the poem. No father or mother can *force* a son's or a daughter's love.

> **Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,**
> **And yearned toward William; but the youth, because**
> **He had been always with her in the house,**
> **Thought not of Dora.**

As might have been expected, William only regarded her as a brother would a sister. With Dora, however, it was the one true love of a lifetime. Refusing his father's command to engage himself to Dora (which was right), William was banished from home, and rashly married Mary Morrison,

> **Half in love, and half in spite**

(which was wrong). In a year their union was blessed with a boy, but distress came upon them (secretly relieved by Dora's own savings), and William died of starvation-fever. Then Dora's loving heart conceived and executed the stratagem by which the hard grandfather Allan's heart was at last softened. In the midst of the most prosperous harvest-time that the farmer had enjoyed for five years, the maiden takes her little nephew, wreathes his little hat with flowers, "to make him pleasing to her uncle's eye,"—a pretty feminine touch—and sets him among the reapers. The courage of love has in Dora conquered the fear of her uncle. When Allan, discovering that the child is his grandson, takes him home,

but harshly sends away Dora, then the meek Mary, now a widow, fires up, and, alert with the instinct of motherhood, goes boldly to the farmer, and claims her son. She makes a touching appeal to Allan to take back Dora, and tells him of William's last words, which were of his father, confessing that he had done wrong to cross his will: "God bless him," he said, "and may he never know the troubles I have gone through."

This breaks down the grandfather's strong barrier of unforgiving pride. "May God forgive me! I have been to blame, to blame!"

> And all the man was broken with remorse,
> And all his love came back a hundredfold,
> And for three hours he sobbed o'er William's child
> Thinking of William . . . . . .
> So those four abode
> Within one house together; and as years
> Went forward, Mary took another mate,
> But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

Dora is a bright and pure example of the truths that

> Every heart that loves with truth is equal to endure;

and that

> Love, if love be perfect, casts out fear.

"Sea-Dreams" is another English Idyll teaching forgiveness.

A clerk in a provincial city entrusts all his savings of "a dozen years of dust and desk-work" to a sanctimonious friend who speculates and loses them all in a

rotten Peruvian mine. This rogue is pilloried for all time in a masterly passage of rhymed heroic verse, in the manner of Dryden. Lines from it have been often quoted by M. P.'s and others as a part of their political invective. We can understand the bitterness thrown into the description of the swindler, when we remember the poet's financial ruin in 1844, through misplaced confidence in "Earnest-frothy" Dr. Allan.

With all his conscience and one eye askew,
So false, he partly took himself for true,
Whose pious talk, when most his heart was dry,
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his eye;
Who never naming God except for gain
So never took that useful Name in vain . . .
Not deeds of gift, but gifts of Grace he forged,
And snake-like slimed the victim ere he gorged.

The clerk and his wife have come to the seaside for the health of their child, Margaret, whose

Clear germander eye
Droopt in the giant-factoried city's gloom.

But the feeling of their loss saddens all their converse. They each narrate a singular dream, dreamt on the same night, and muse on the interpretation thereof—hence the name of the poem, "Sea-Dreams." In the reflections of the victimised clerk occurs a remarkable thought upon intuition, the result of "first sight," and further experience as causative of the "second thoughts" that are usually valued as "best."

Is it so true that "second thoughts are best"?
Not first and third, which are a riper first?—
Ah love, there surely lives in man and beast
Something divine, to warn them of their foes:
And such a sense, when first I fronted him,
Said "Trust him not"; but after, *when I came*
To know him more, I lost it, knew him less;
Fought with what seem'd my own uncharity; . . .
Went further, fool!—and trusted him with all . . .

A subtle psychological truth, though it looks like a parodox, which I have myself verified in practical life, is embodied in the lines I have italicised.

The husband, naturally, bears bitter resentment against the man that had ruined him,—and doubtless others,—but the wife is from the first gently persistent for forgiveness. She urges that the rogue's conscience will punish him enough:—

His gain is loss: for he that wrongs his friend
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about
A silent court of justice in his breast,
Himself the judge and jury, and himself
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemned.

The poet here introduces a dramatic episode. The fraudulent speculator is reported by a visitor, who calls on the wife while her husband and child are away on the sea-shore, to have dropped down dead, an hour after the clerk had met him in the street. The clerk returns, and the wife startles him with the strange news. She says:—

"Why were you silent when I spoke to-night?
I had set my heart on your forgiving him
Before you knew. We *must* forgive the dead."
He replies, "Dead, who is dead?"
"The man your eye pursued,
A little after you had parted with him—
He suddenly dropt dead of heart disease."

"Dead? He? Of heart disease; what heart had he
To die of?"
"Ah, dearest, if there be
A devil in a man, there is an angel too,
And if he did that wrong you charge him with,
His angel broke his heart . . . .
He can do no more wrong—forgive him, dear,
And I shall sleep the sounder."

Then the man:
"His deeds yet live—the worst is yet to come;
Yet let your sleep for this one night be sound.
I do forgive him."

"Sea-Dreams" is a noble poem, expressing many fine thoughts, and inspiring us with the ethics of the Lord's Prayer; reminding us also that

Human forgiveness touches Heaven, and thence
Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven.

Of all the "English Idylls," "Enoch Arden," or "The Old Fisherman," is, I think, the best constructed and most complete. It came out in 1864, and has become so popular as to have created a new phrase in our common parlance—"An Enoch Arden in real Life." The poem is full of dramatic action and emotion: it has been dramatised successfully in America, and the central figure is a

most interesting study. The only blemish is the excessively ornate diction—in which Enoch Arden contrasts unfavourably with "Dora" and "Sea-Dreams"; and its over-elaboration of simple incident, as when the poet takes up ten lines of dignified blank verse to convey the information that Enoch hawked fish in an osier basket!

The tale is one of real life, given to Tennyson by Woolner, the sculptor, as occurring on the Suffolk coast.

A good story is told of the effect of the poem on the poor of a certain town. A district visitor was giving out tracts to a meeting of her poor people, to whom she had lately read parts of "Enoch Arden." "Thank you, ma'am," said one old lady, "but I'd give all I had for that beautiful tract which you read t'other day: it did me a power of good." And so said the others.

Now the mistake of taking "Enoch Arden" for a religious tract is not so absurd as at first sight it may appear. Consistently with the devoutly religious character of the simple honest fisherman, the whole poem is pervaded by the words and phrases from the Bible. For instance, take Enoch's farewell to his wife—

> **Cast all your care on God: that anchor holds.**
> **Is he not yonder in these uttermost**
> **Parts of the morning? If I flee to these**
> **Can I go from Him? And the sea is His . . .**

The story is too well known for me to spend time in re-telling it; but some episodes showing the genius of the poet and his skill in character-drawing may be quoted

here. The reader scarce knows which character to admire most,—Annie Arden, with her constancy of love and hope which refuses for twelve long years to believe that Enoch is dead, and is then hardly convinced of it "by a sign" from the Holy Book; or Philip Ray, the rejected suitor of early years, still loving on; delicate in his generous kindness; still hoping to win her, his only love,—though being the richest man in the village, he could have had his choice of the best.

That curious superstition, divination by opening the Bible at random, still exists in Cornwall, and elsewhere, and is cleverly introduced here, when Annie, driven half-wild by Philip's entreaties, seeks an absolute supernatural sign of Enoch's survival of death. Having one sleepless night seized the Bible and "suddenly set it wide to find a sign," she

> **Suddenly put her finger on the text**
> **"Under the palm-tree,"—That was nothing to her,**
> **No meaning there: she closed the Book and slept.**
> **When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height**
> **Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun:**
> **"He is gone," she thought, "he is happy, he is singing**
> **Hosanna in the highest; yonder shines**
> **The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms**
> **Whereof the happy people strowing, cried**
> **'Hosanna in the Highest.'"**

And it was at this very moment that Enoch Arden, eagerly scanning the ocean, sighted the ship that liberated him. *His* faith and hope never seemed to leave him altogether, for he was a prayerful man.

> . . . . . had not his poor heart
> Spoken with *Him*, *Who* being everywhere,
> Lets none who speak with Him seem all alone,
> Surely the man had died of solitude.

But the marriage of Annie and Philip had taken place, and the most poignant trial of all his toilsome life—only blessed with seven years of happiness—was yet to come. When, creeping up in the dusk of the evening to the garden in the rear of Philip's house, with hunger of the heart he beheld

> His wife, his wife no more, and saw the babe,
> Hers yet not his, upon the father's knee,
> And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness,
> And his own children, tall and beautiful,
> And him, that other, reigning in his place,
> Lord of his rights, and of his children's love: . . .

He could scarce forbear

> To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry
> Which in one moment, like a blast of doom,
> Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He retires, and prays most fervently:

> Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
> A little longer! aid me, give me strength
> Not to tell her, never to let her know.

During the long year of mental suffering and slow bodily decay that followed, prayer was still his solace:—

> He was not all unhappy. His resolve
> Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore
> Prayer from a living source within the will,

> And beating up through all the bitter world,
> Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
> Kept him a living soul.

And so Divine power sustained him, until one night

> There came so loud a calling of the sea
> That all the houses in the haven rang,

when, with the joyful cry, "A sail! a sail!" "the strong heroic soul" of Enoch "passed away."

There are scores of interesting points in this poem which I must pass: but I will mention one. That curious phrase, "the calling of the sea," was picked up by Tennyson from a saying of the Norfolk fishermen. When there is a ground-swell on a calm night they say, "The sea is moaning for the loss of the wind."

Perhaps it is superfluous to anyone well acquainted with Tennyson's poems to bring forward incidents in his life to show that the ethical principles inculcated in the three poems just discussed, and in others, were the rule of his conduct.

But as I have mentioned "Tennyson's kindheartedness" in the Syllabus, I will give a few instances of it from the Biography. You will be surprised and pained to hear that not only was this great poet attacked by critics, and misrepresented by absurd anecdotes in the Press, but that he received many abusive anonymous letters, and for 42 years, after the appearance of every new volume, came one in the same handwriting. Suddenly they ceased; probably coincidently with the death of the writer.

Tennyson's equanimity was undisturbed: he was merely "sorry for the man who had so much spite."

One such letter, received after Maud came out, the poet used to repeat with humorous intonation: "Sir, I used to worship you, but now I hate you. I loathe and detest you. You beast! So you've taken to imitating Longfellow! Yours, in aversion. . . . ."

All his life he was ready and willing to relieve the necessities of deserving literary men in distress, ungrudgingly, and without ostentation. In the year following his financial losses, he gave a large donation to one such case. Refusing honours for himself until his old age, he asked the Government only three favours, at long intervals, viz.: (1) to increase the Government Savings Bank interest for small deposits; (2) to grant a pension to a poor author, "R. C. W."; and (3) to increase the poet William Allingham's small allowance. In 1869, when his ex-publisher, Edward Moxon, died in difficulties, Tennyson, though all the accounts had long been settled between them, voluntarily and anonymously gave the widow Mrs. Moxon and her daughters a considerable annual pension. In 1875, having had to protect the copyright of his "Lover's Tale," pirated by Mr. Herne Shepherd, against whom a decree was issued by the Court of Chancery, Tennyson, on learning that the defendant was poor, and also the sole support of his mother, paid all the costs of the proceedings out of his own pocket. It was kind also of him to pay the ex-

penses back to his own country of an eccentric American who had worked his passage over the Atlantic in a cattle steamer, for the express purpose of reciting the poem of Maud to its author. "My Father," says Hallam Tennyson, "allowed him to do so, but suffered from the recitation."

Tennyson rejoiced whenever he heard of any good his poems had done to individuals. As an example of the consolation given by "In Memoriam" to countless mourners, I will mention one told to the poet by Miss Agnes Weld. A colonist in Australia, feeling his utter loneliness after the death of his wife, was going in search of a weapon wherewith to kill himself, when he came across a copy of "In Memoriam." He opened it, became absorbed in it, and read on and on until all thoughts of suicide left him, and there stole into his heart a peace that never afterwards deserted it. Again the poet was cheered by a letter in 1855, telling him how the "Two Voices," which had been written when the author was in the lowest mood of despondency, but which ends in Hope, had roused another man from a state of suicidal despair.

Among his choicest treasures, Tennyson kept two grateful letters, which his son has given us *verbatim*, and well worthy are they of print. One was written in 1849 by Samuel Bamford, an old carpet weaver of 70, who lived in poverty, and yet had elevated literary tastes. Being too poor to buy Tennyson's poems, he used to

borrow them, as they came out, from friends, and commit each poem to memory. Mrs. Gaskell, our Lancashire authoress, introduced him to Tennyson by letter, and his heart was rejoiced with a free gift of the latest volume. The old weaver's letter expresses enthusiastic delight in his new treasure, and the poet called it "the highest honour I have yet received."

I know so well from my Colonial experience, how lonely the life of a settler in the bush is, and especially for the wives, who are often left alone for days together by their husbands' necessary duties as to cattle, etc., that I give here an extract from the letter of a Mrs. Vyner, of Riverina, Australia, written in 1855, and carefully preserved by Tennyson: . . . "You must let me tell you how in a lonely home among the mountains, with my young children asleep, my husband absent, no sound to be heard but the cry of the wild dog, or the wail of the curlew; no lock or bolt to guard our solitary hut; strong in our utter helplessness, I have turned (next to God's Book) to you as a friend. I have read far into the night, until my lot seemed light, and a joy seemed cast around my very menial toils. Then I have said, 'God bless the Poet, and still put beautiful words and thoughts into his heart,'—and the burden of life became pleasant, or at least easy to me. I know that the blessing of a faithful heart cannot be bootless: and may He Who seeth not as man seeth spare you to plead the cause of

truth, and to spurn foolish saws and sickly conventionalities."

The various moods in which Tennyson wrote have all their counterpart in our lesser lives. Precious words of cheer, for young, middle-aged, and old, striving after success which has not yet been attained, abound in his poems, such as these:—

> All precious things discovered late
> To those that seek them, issue forth,
> For Love, in sequel, works with Fate
> And draws the veil from hidden worth,

All the poems to which I have above alluded are "Idylls of the Home," and Tennyson might with as much truth be called the "Poet of the English Home," as the "Poet of Woman," which title was conferred on him by enthusiastic reviewers after the production of the "Princess." A cheerful home the Laureate considered to be not only the highest expression of human happiness on earth, but also the main cause of the unity, stability, and greatness of the British Nation. And so must all thoughtful patriots regard it, for "Home, sweet Home" is the focus, the illuminating point, and the magnetic pole of all purest affection, and it is the unit of the social system of all races of Teutonic origin. It is a striking fact that only in the language of the Teutonic Race—of which we Anglo-Saxons are the most prominent nation—is there a word which connotes all that we mean by "Home."

The Latin Race has only a word for house (*maison*) and a periphrasis for being indoors (*chez lui*). A clever French author, Mons. Demolins, in his recent work, "*A Quoi tient la Superiorité des Anglo-Saxons*," rightly ascribes our leading position in the world, to-day, to our home life, our personal independence, and our individualism contrasted with the more public and social life and state-controlled action of the Latin nations. Our innate British love of adventure having expanded Great Britain into Greater Britain, the whole globe is now encircled with British homes, modelled upon the family life of the dear Old Country—still affectionately called "Home."

> **O happy he, and fit to live,**
> **On whom a happy home has power**
> **To make him trust his life, and give**
> **His fealty to the halcyon hour.**

Married life Tennyson looked upon as the noblest blooming of love. From some contemporary poets he is marked out by his chivalrous and even reverential respect for womanhood. He carried in his heart all through life three good, true, and beautiful models of feminine character—his pious mother, whom he has immortalised in those well known lines in the "Princess"; his sister, Emilia, whose sweet character reappears in "Dora," and who, like Dora, remained single till her death, faithful to Arthur Hallam's memory; and lastly, his own sweet wife, with her intellect and intuition giving him helpful criticism, and her "tender, delicate, spiritual face," which was

itself an inspiration to him. Milton himself had not a purer nature than Tennyson's. Like his own peerless knight, he could say—and this is the secret of much of his success—

> **My strength is as the strength of ten**
> **Because my heart is pure.**

With intense feeling he used to say: "I would pluck my hand from a man, even if he were my greatest hero, or my dearest friend, if he wronged a woman, or told her a lie."

All his poems display a profound knowledge of Love, in its different forms, but from its spiritual and not from its fleshly side. He always allies Love with Duty, and when the two are divorced, as in the case of Queen Guinevere and Sir Lancelot, the ruin of the whole fabric so laboriously built up by King Arthur promptly follows. Yet Tennyson's love-lyrics are not cold, as if he strove to describe a passion he had never felt. No: they are ardent, yet not erotic, passionate but also pure. He would not, nay, he could not, write down to the sensual style of Rossetti and Swinburne. With Shakesperian force and dignity he asserts that the man whose heart hath never opened to the true love of a good pure woman

> **Lives**
> **A drowning life, besetted in sweet self;**
> **Or pines in sad experience worse than death;**
> **Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime.**

The famous vow of the Knights of the Round Table, the poet expands into a grand general principle:—

To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds
Until they win her, for indeed I know
Of no more subtle master under Heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man
But teach high thoughts, and amiable words
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

The permanence of true love he continually harps upon, as every poet does—

No lapse of moons can canker Love
Whatever fickle tongues may say;

and again—

But who love best have best a right to know
That love by right Divine is Deathless King.

That love purifies the heart from selfishness is taught in the first "Locksley Hall."

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords
with might;
Smote the chord of Self that, trembling, pass'd in music out
of sight.

A subtle note of psychological insight is given in these lines from "Geraint and Enid"—

The' men may bicker with the things they love
They would not make them laughable in all eyes,
Not while they loved them.

The profound truth that in time it comes to happen that

Love reflects the thing beloved,

and the still deeper, though debatable, truth that

'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all,

must wind up my quotations on this fascinating subject.

The poet does not disdain to notice love which is a passing fancy, called in modern language "flirtation" (A-S. *fleardian*, "to trifle"). In the "Gardener's Daughter," Juliet, whose portrait the poet's friend, Eustace, was painting while the narrator was wooing Rose, was at one time

To me myself, for some three careless moons
The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of—nothing! Know you not
Such touches are but embassies of love
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life.

A beautiful picture of sylvan lovers' meetings, perhaps from Tennyson's own early acquaintance with Emily Sellwood, is to be found in this passage from "The Gardener's Daughter." Notice the exquisite and very original simile in the last two lines:—

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—
Of that which came between, more sweet than each,
In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round like a nightingale—in sighs
Which perfect Joy, perplexed for utterance,
Stole from her sister Sorrow. I might tell
Of difference, reconcilement, pledges given
And vows where there was never need of vows,
And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap,
Hung tranced from all pulsation,—as above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale

Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;
. . . . . Or as once we met
Unheedful tho', beneath a whispering rain
Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

Many poets seem to regard woman as a plaything, but Tennyson always regarded her seriously. Holding a high and just appreciation of her powers and capacities, by his "Princess," he deserves the credit of being called the 19th Century pioneer of her Higher Education.

Daniel de Foe's noteworthy suggestion, in 1697, that there should be a College for Women in every county, and ten in London, had fallen flat; and Mary Wollstonecraft's "Rights of Woman," in 1792, had been scouted as revolutionary. The Laureate lived to see not only University Education thrown open to women, but also the medical and scholastic professions. In 1887, five years before his death, he uttered a noteworthy opinion:

"I want people to recognise that the women of our Western Hemisphere represent the highest type of woman, greatly owing to the respect and honour paid to them by men, but that the moment that honour and respect are diminished, the high type of woman will vanish. . . . There is a great future for woman in furthering the progress of Humanity, if she will cultivate her understanding, not merely her memory, her inborn spirituality, and her sympathy with all that is pure, noble, and beautiful. . . . In fine,"

> Let her make herself her own
> To give or keep, to live, and learn, and be
> All that harms not distinctive womanhood.

In every love-born marriage, a woman gains more than she loses. It is a fact that the best qualities of woman's being are only elicited by motherhood.

As married life goes on, the husband will

> Gain in sweetness and in moral height

while the wife need not

> Lose the child-like in the larger mind.

Why should women lose their grace, their selflessness, and their delicacy of feeling in the stern competition with men in trades and professions already crowded? But this is a large question, which I cannot here discuss; only let me say that I rejoice that there are, nowadays, so many *suitable* occupations open for our surplus female population.

The theory of the perfect equality of the sexes Tennyson always rejected. It is an *ignis fatuus* leading to a miry bog of disappointment. There is much truth in what old-fashioned King Gama says:—

> Man for the field, and woman for the hearth,
> Man for the sword, and for the needle she,
> Man with the head, and woman with the heart,
> Man to command, and woman to obey.

As to the training of children at home, Tennyson used to say, "Make their lives as happy as possible." He was

the life-long companion of his boys, and was his grandsons' favourite playmate. His biographer states that the virtues which his parents were most anxious to impress upon him were absolute truthfulness, charity to the poor, and courtesy to all servants. Tennyson's pretty little child-songs,—"What does little Birdie say?" "Minnie and Winnie," &c., show he could write down to the comprehension of the youngest. In his 81st year he wrote this graceful triplet for his grandson, Lionel Hallam Tennyson:—

> Father and mother will watch you grow,
> And gather the roses wherever they blow,
> And find the white heather wherever you go,
> My sweet.

No one would have more sternly condemned the senseless and mischievous attacks on the Divine institution of marriage, by Grant Allen, Mona Caird, Sarah Grand, and others, than Tennyson. But these assaults continue; what are called "Socialist unions" come to light now and again; and perhaps Mr. Gladstone's remarkable prediction in 1890, when he was hot with anger at the Parnell affair, may come true,—that "the battle of the Christian faith will have to be fought around the marriage altar."

To young men entering on life Tennyson's poems give many warning, helpful, and wise messages. What I have termed "A Sermonette" in the syllabus is a piece of admirable advice he gave to a youth on the eve of enter-

ing a University. "If a man," said he, "is merely to be a bundle of sensations, he had better not exist at all. He should embark on his career in the spirit of self-less and adventurous heroism; should develop his true self, by not shirking responsibility, by casting aside all maudlin and introspective morbidities; and by using his powers cheerfully, in accordance with the obvious dictates of his moral consciousness, in harmony with what he feels to be the Absolute Right. . . . It is motive, it is the great purpose, which consecrates life. The real test of a man is not what he knows, but what he is in himself, and in his relation to others. . . . The love of God is the true basis of duty, truth, reverence, loyalty, love, virtue, and work. 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.'" Then he added, with a sudden change of tone, and with characteristic humour:—"But don't be a prig. Most young men with anything in them make fools of themselves at some time or another":—

> He makes no friends who never made a foe. . . .
> Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a fool.

"All life," the poet said on another occasion, "is a school, a preparation, a purpose." But although one may lay down good principles of conduct, what life is each one must learn by living it out.

> And others' follies teach us not,
> Nor much their wisdom teaches;
> And most of sterling worth is what
> Our own experience preaches.

Tennyson always encouraged his young friends—and countless numbers asked him for advice—to study moral and social questions of the day for themselves, and not to accept conventional opinions without weighing them. For worldly judgments are often false, sometimes only half-true, and always superficial. For instance:—

> **The world which credits what is done**
> **Is cold to all that might have been.**

Again,

> **Men will forget what we suffer, but not what we do.**

Again,

> **The world will not believe a man repents.**

And once more, concerning false ideals:

> **O purblind race of miserable men!**
> **How many among us at this very hour**
> **Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves**
> **By taking true for false, or false for true?**

Let us take the poet's warning against false ideals in Art and Literature. Tennyson wrote that grand allegory, the "Palace of Art," purposely to show that the worship of Art by the soul of Man is utterly futile, inadequate, and wrong, as a substitute for the worship of God. Thirty years passed, and Tennyson felt it his duty to warn his fellow countrymen against Art tainted

> **With poisonous honey stolen from France.**

Fifteen years later, when the poison had spread, he exclaimed indignantly to a friend, "They talk of 'Art

for Art's sake'; there is something higher—'Art for Man's sake.' . . . The higher moral imagination enslaved to sense is like an eagle caught by the feet in a snare baited with carrion, so that it cannot use its wings to soar. . . . . Look at Zola, for instance,—his Art becomes monstrous—because he does not practise selection and he shows up the evils of the world without the Ideal."

The French nation, before their great Débacle, were solemnly warned by Matthew Arnold against the lubricity of their Art and Literature, which has since so seriously impaired their national vigour. Let us on this side of the Channel demand from the creators of British Art and Literature works which are wholesome in tone, and of an influence which makes for purity, and not for lubricity.

And now let us notice a transcendental power that Tennyson possessed, a power which probably brought him some of his grandest thoughts, and which he has recorded in no less than four of his poems,— viz., in "The Princess," "The Holy Grail," "The Ancient Sage," and "In Memoriam." Dr. Marsden discovered in 1844 that Tennyson had great mesmeric power: this gift was utilised in healing two ladies, time after time,—Mrs. Marsden and Mrs. Tennyson. But the wonderful faculty the poet possessed, quite unique among poets, so far as my researches extend, was his power of throwing himself into a trance-state by repeating a certain formula; or,

sometimes, it would come spontaneously. Tennyson described it thus, in 1875—"When all alone, this has often come to me by repeating my own name to myself, silently, till all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to resolve and fade away into boundless being. And this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality seeming no extinction, but the only true life." When in this mysterious trance, his body and limbs seemed to him to belong to someone else; yet an accidental touch or movement, even of a finger, was like a shock, and brought the body back again (to earth?) with a terrible start.

When in this trance-state he believed that he received communications or impressions from intelligences in the Unseen World, and this statement explains the 95th section of "In Memoriam," where the soul of his long-dead friend speaks to him:—

> So word by word, and line by line,
> The dead man touched me from the past,
> And all at once it seemed at last
> The living soul was flesh'd on mine;
>
> And mine in this was wound, and whirled
> About empyreal heights of thought
> And came on that which is, and caught
> The deep pulsations of the world,
>
> Æonian music, measuring out
> The steps of time . . . .

Other poets, such as Coleridge, Shelley, Wordsworth, Longfellow, have had singular and weird experiences when the poetic *afflatus* was upon them, but nothing in their biographies comes near this wonderful power of "self-hypnotisation." Was it a special grace from Heaven as a reward for the purity and moral elevation of his poetry, that Tennyson, alone of poets, should have given to him in these ecstatic hours a psycho-physical assurance of the immortality of his personal existence?

And now a few of the Laureate's great thoughts upon those Higher Principles in Man which link him with the Divine, will complete our Study of this grand Poet of Humanity. "Freewill," said Tennyson, who often discoursed with Dr. Jowett and other high intellects upon the subject, "is the main miracle, apparently an act of self-limitation by the Infinite, and yet a revelation by Himself of Himself."

In that terse sonnet on "Will" the poet solemnly warns us against the misuse and degradation, by weakly yielding to temptation, of this God-given power.

The first verse, you remember, begins

> O well for him whose will is strong!
> He suffers, but he will not suffer long;
> He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong.

But the special emphasis of the whole piece lies in the second stanza, which runs thus:

> But ill for him, who, bettering not with time,
> Corrupts the strength of Heaven-descended Will,
> And ever weaker grows through acted crime
> Or seeming-genial venial fault
> Recurring and suggesting still! . . . . .

In two lines Tennyson sums up the final purpose of the existence of this human "Free-will":

> Our wills are ours, we know not why;
> Our wills are ours to make Thine.

Tennyson was a practical believer in Prayer, and not even Shakespeare has grasped so firmly the true concept of this marvellous means of intercourse with the God of the Universe. Nor has any poet, not reckoned exclusively a devotional poet, or hymn writer, written more exquisite lines on Prayer than he has given us. Prayer is

> A breath that fleets beyond this iron world
> And touches Him who made it.

When the soul of man is drooping with doubt and fear, fast-bound in the prison-fetters of unbelief, Tennyson furnishes him with this beautiful invocation:

> Steel me with patience! soften me with grief!
> Let blow the trumpet strongly while I pray
> Till this embattled wall of unbelief,
> My prison, not my fortress, fall away.

Do we need to know where God is, in order to pray?—

> Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet;
> Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

The well-known passage in the Passing of Arthur, beginning

> **Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer**
> **Than this world dreams of,**

etc., is as eloquent a tribute to the potency of prayer as exists in all poetry. And the poet in "The Two Voices" is brought out of a state of despair

> **To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,**
> **That every cloud, that spreads above**
> **And veileth love, itself is love.**

Although there is in Tennyson's second "Locksley Hall" a distinct note of sadness, coupled with a scathing exposure of our social evils, in such lines as—

> **When was age so crammed with menace, madness, written, spoken lies?**

yet the poet in conversation, declared that the old man, who is the speaker in this "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," has a stronger faith in God, and in human goodness, than he had possessed in his youth, but that he (the author) had introduced this despondency into the poem appropriately, as tending to show the *decreased energy of life in old age.* In a very interesting criticism on "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," contributed to the "Nineteenth Century," for January, 1887, Mr. Gladstone made a brilliant defence of the "times we live in," showing how very

greatly all conditions of life and social order had improved in Great Britain since the date of the original "Locksley Hall." It is right refreshing to be cheered by an optimist like the "Grand Old Man," but the thoughtful Christian patriot cannot but feel sometimes apprehensive of the decay of Good, when he looks around a world where chivalrous respect for women is decaying; where the Supernatural is measured and analysed by the incommensurate standards of Physical Science; and where the devil is worshipped in the "Gay City" of Europe.

It is a glory of Tennyson's poetry that in contrast to the pessimism of many present-day singers, it teaches, as a whole,

> **The love of Freedom, the desire of God,**
> **The hope of larger life hereafter.**

I cannot understand why some of our younger poets, whose genius is recognised, and who are not in want, should feel, or affect, a gloomy weariness of life, and a listless pagan agnosticism as to the future life, in this country of the open Bible and of advanced Christian thought. Here is Mr. William Watson, in his latest volume, giving us this dreary sentiment:—

> **Here, where perhaps alone**
> **I conquer or I fail—**
> **Here, o'er the dark deep blown,**
> **I ask no perfumed gale;**

> I ask the unpampering breath
> That fits me to endure
> Chance, and Victorious Death,
> Life, and my doom obscure,
> Who know not whence I am sped
> Nor to what port I sail.

And Mr. W. E. Henley, another poet of undoubted genius, sings in the spirit and almost in the manner of Matthew Arnold nearly as hopeless a lay:—

> Thus, through the world—
> Seeing, and feeling, and knowing—
> Goes man: till at last,
> Tired of experience, he turns
> To the friendly and comforting breast
> Of the old nurse, Death.

Are these despairing cries likely to aid anyone to fight the battle of life, much less to give the combatants in the struggle,—where so many *do* fail,—a cheering assurance of a larger and happier life beyond the grave? Nay, verily. Contrast these utterances with Tennyson's grandly-inspired *certainties* of the love of God that will finally extinguish evil from the Universe, of the impending Millennium of Peace, of the Eternal Bliss of the Purified Soul; of the marvellous power of Prayer, and of many other rock-based truths.

> Doubt no longer that the Highest is the Wisest and the Best;
> Let not all that saddens Nature blight thy Hope, or break
> thy Rest. . . . .
>
> The Face of Death is towards the Sun of Life.

My own dim life should teach me this—
That life shall live for evermore.

Peace! for I loved him, and love him for ever; the dead are not dead, but alive.

And lastly, Tennyson's own robust faith was expressed in his "swan-song"—"Crossing the Bar," which it is needless to quote here.

The secret of the profound and lasting influence for good which radiates from Tennyson's works, and with which his recorded life is harmonious, is this, that he firmly believed that his poetic genius was a gift from God, and must be consecrated to His Service. The poet's extreme fastidiousness as to form and expression arose from his real impression that nothing he had composed had ever reached the standard of perfection, short of which he must never rest. "All he could hope," he said to Miss Weld, "was that he had brought men a little nearer God."

To sum up my estimate of Tennyson in the three aspects of Nature-Poet, National Poet, and Poet of Humanity, I would re-assert that his lofty strains teach the Great Truth that Progress is the Law of Man's being, and Faith, Hope, and Love its triple inspiration. They also teach that Man's Will, the freedom of which attests his relationship to God, is granted him that he may conform it to the Will of His Maker. The whole spirit and tone of his best poems are calculated to help men to carry into their lives the sub-